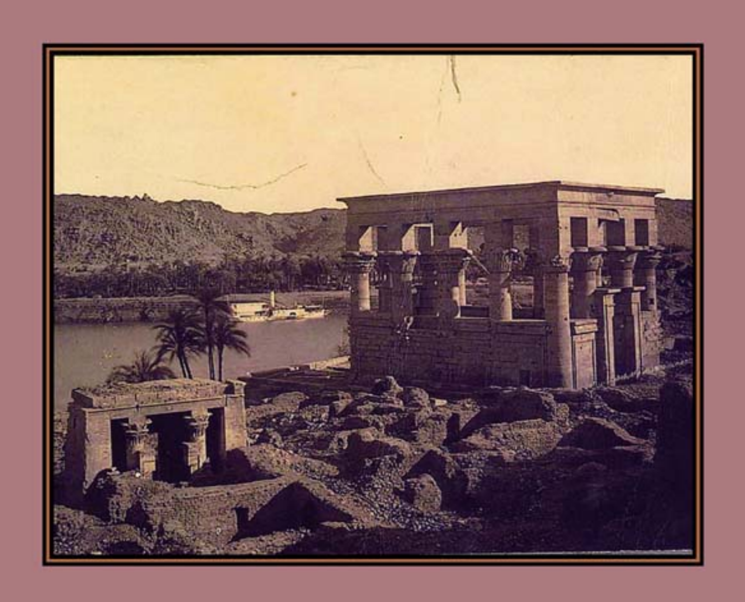
NUBIA AND EGYPT 10,000 B.C. TO 400 A.D.



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10,000 B.C. TO 400 A.D.
From Prehistory to the Meroitic Period

Larry Ross

With a Foreword by
Gregory Kirk Anderson

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Dr. Ralph M. Rowlett (Harvard 1968),
who inspired and supported my interest in Nubia at
the University of Missouri-Columbia.

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Preface

Nubia. The name conjures the mystery and myth of a forgotten culture rendered mute by time. But the pyramids and sphinxes of its northern neighbor, Egypt, have commanded the attention of men for millennia. Since inspiring the rise of modern archeology in the late eighteenth century, the land has been scoured for its secrets.

Massive temples with imposing columns have emerged from its sands, and dark burial chambers have come to light. Their vivid murals, treasure troves, and decoded hieroglyphics proclaim Egypt's history, customs, religion, and might. In contrast, Nubia appears a nation of country cousins whose rustic culture became assimilated in the sophisticated civilization of its northern masters.

Dr. Larry Ross challenges this conventional view with a comprehensive scholarly work that synthesizes and scrupulously documents the latest archeological research. Nubia, it appears, was not all that rustic, nor were Nubia and Egypt all that distinct. Indeed, "Egyptian culture" is now known to have sprung from a Nubian root. Nubian gold made Nubia the first trading hub along the Nile, and trade made the early Nubians more sophisticated and cosmopolitan than their neighbors to the north. The first pottery in Africa arose in Nubia, and the Pharonic tradition with its cult symbols began with Nubian rulers. The first pharaohs were of Nubian ancestry as surely as Nubian gold flowed through Pharonic coffers. The traditional distinction between Egypt and Nubia oversimplifies the complex relationship of two neighbors intertwined in one cultural area.

If Nubians were the founding aristocracy of Nile Valley Civilization, why this caricature of them as rustics? Two answers can be given, one from the distant past, the other from the recent past. Though the first Pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom came from a Nubian mother, the rise of the Nubian nation-state Kerma came to pose a distinct threat to his successors. Kerma allied with the Hyskos in their subjugation of Egypt that ended the Middle Kingdom, and after Egypt threw off the Hyskos yoke, it exacted revenge on Kerma by conquering it. Hence followed the Egyptian propaganda of "wretched Kush," a political lie that justified the exploitation of Nubian gold from a vassal state.

But why has this Pharonic propaganda of the New Kingdom been so thoughtlessly accepted the last two centuries? The answer lies in the mindset of the pioneering European archeologists. Steeped in constructs of "race" that sharply differentiated "civilization" from "darkest Africa," they could not imagine Egyptian splendors rising from dark-skinned "negroids" of the Nile. Therefore, they arbitrarily hypothesized light-skinned Asiatics or a mysterious "dynastic race" as the forebears of pharonic greatness.

As Foucault pointed out, historical method can not yield a progressive understanding that rises in a steady, unbroken line, but must invite continual re-evaluation in the light of new evidence and a new cultural contextualization of old evidence. Dr. Ross invokes Foucault as he parallels the methodology of history with the paradigm shifts that Thomas Kuhn emphasized in the development of scientific models. *Nubia and Egypt 10,000 B. C. to 400 A.D.* proposes a paradigm shift in our understanding of Nubian and Egyptian

history: whether one agrees with Dr. Ross or not, his argument is one that must be addressed.

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It is my great pleasure to thank and acknowledge the numerous professors, mentors, and colleagues who have been supportive of my endeavors over the years. At Case Western Reserve University, Dr. Stefan Machlup, Dr. Atwood D. Gaines, Dr. Jim G. Shaffer, Dr. Vincent E. McHale, and Dr. James Aronson (now at Dartmouth); at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Dr. Michael C. Robbins, Dr. Ralph Rowlett, Dr. W. Raymond Wood, the late Dr. Julius E. Thompson, Dr. Rex Campbell, Dr. Charles Sampson; at Lincoln University President Dr. Carolyn R. Mahoney, Professor Kirk Anderson, Dr. Walter "Cal" Johnson (Chair), Professor Joylean Sampson, and Dr. Ruthi Sturdevant (Dean), and University Librarian (Retired) Elizabeth Briscoe-Wilson and the staff at Inman E. Page Library; at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz; at Northern Illinois University Dr. Giovanni Bennardo and Dr. Katherine Wiegele; at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History Esther Bockhoff, M.A., Curator Emerita, and Dr. Williard F. Harper of the Board of Directors. Certainly, a special acknowledgement must go to the man who inspired and mentored me when I was 14-years-old, Engineer and Tuskegee Airman the late Samuel Benford. I would also like to acknowledge my unconditional colleague and friend in Cleveland Heights, Ohio bassist Francois Roland from Switzerland.

Introduction

Although a number of exceptional books have been written about Nubia and Egypt, characterizations of the *relationship* between the two are often somewhat confusing, or even an outright misrepresentation of this culture area. Recent archaeological data, and reinterpretations of previously collected material, provide us with the opportunity to take a fresh look at the impact that Nubia had on Egypt, and *vice versa*. Dr. Christopher Ehret raised some important questions regarding interpretation, and the use of the terms "tribe," "primitive," and "race" that permeate the literature, in *The Civilizations of Africa*:

> "Historians of ancient times fall into a related interpretive trap. They classify certain societies as civilizations and the rest as something other than civilizations. So general and uncritical is the acceptance of this practice by both the readers and writers of history that it may astonish the reader to learn just how insubstantial and inadequately grounded such a conceptualization is. Why are Africans in 'traditional' dress said to be engaging in 'tribal' dancing, when Europeans garbed similarly in the clothes of an earlier time are said to be performing 'folk' dances? Why is the work of African artists, done in the styles of previous centuries, called 'tribal' art? Is it not simply an art fashioned by Africans? Why is the rural African man of today, who is more attuned to rural culture and less caught up in the modern-

> day African urban milieu called the 'tribesman'? Isn't he just a man, the same as any other?"[1]

Westernization and the Study of Africa

Thus, the study of Africa embodies a subsumed *Westernization* that even goes so far as to classify African cultural products as "*Art*," in the Western sense, which is again a pejorative misrepresentation, because there is no word in West African languages for "Art" according to Ousmane Sembene the Senegalese novelist. In 2002 I took my *Black Aesthetics* class to the Joslyn Art Museum, which is the main museum for the city of Omaha, Nebraska. It is a large, fabulous facility that even has a number of grand pianos where concerts are performed in an atrium. The museum has a full-fledged dining area, and an immaculate gift shop as well: just what you would expect to see in a major museum, in one of America's major cities. We toured the entire facility, and it had an exceptional collection; however I found that something appeared to be missing. Nowhere in the museum was there an African artifact. Not one. I asked one of the staff members at the museum, "Do you have any African artifacts in the collection?" He remarked, "We had a Nubian exhibit, however it was a traveling exhibit and it is gone."

> "Ousmane Sembene, the great Senegalese novelist and film director, asserts that there is no word for 'art' in any West African languages. Such important signals against the

[1] Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002)

> universalization of Western perspectives are not always respected. In some cultures, no distinction is made between music and medicine, and neophytes are trained in both. We may have to speak of the two functions separately in order to make sense to ourselves, but how can we remember that by doing so we are committing a violence to the worldview of others? If we could imagine some intellectual system that could mediate the radical contextual differences among the values and emphases reflected in the world's different cultural hierarchies, could we imagine that system emerging from the Euro-humanist tradition of the aesthetic, or with more difficulty, imagine it being established and scrutinized in a way that did not support the interests of the endorsers at the expense of the analyzed?"[2]

If we are to 'accurately understand' Nubia, Egypt, and their interaction in antiquity, these narcissistic difficulties must be overcome: granted, it will not be easy… Dr. Clyde R. Taylor also points out the fact that a "Black Aesthetic" is actually an oxymoron, and his study of *the Aesthetic* (*i.e.* the Art-Culture System upon which museums are based) explains why the collection, at the Joslyn Museum of Art, is devoid of African representation: other museum collections may follow suit, and on the surface this may seem like 'a good thing', in that they are not classifying African cultural products as 'Art'. However, there is a more disturbing reason that this may be the case, in view of Ehret

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[2] Clyde R. Taylor, The Mask of Art: Breaking the Aesthetic Contract – Film and Literature (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998) 54.

and Taylor's perspectives. Ehret challenges the generally accepted designation of "Civilization" that is irrationally determined, in many instances. The designation of ancient Egyptian language as "Afro-Asiatic" or "Afrasian" adds fuel to the ambiguous representation of Nubia-Egypt's interaction sphere: it suggests that Egypt was 'somehow' related to Asia, and therefore its civilization had some sort of presumed 'outside influence'. This is a veiled suggestion that Africans were not capable of developing an advanced civilization that built the pyramids, without 'Asian' help; by attaching an 'Asian' origin, early Egyptologists eventually took the ancient Egyptians out of Africa, and *immigration theories* abounded (currently, the U.S. Department of State has Egypt listed in the *Middle East*, not Africa):

> "At each stage in the northward spread of these ideas, Afrasan-speaking communities, we suspect, were the prime movers in the resulting subsistence transformations. As we have seen, the Afrasan language family, contrary to widely held presumptions, originated not in Asia but in Africa, in the regions between the Nubian Nile and the northern Ethiopian Highlands. From there the early Afrasan societies expanded both southeastward into the Horn of Africa and northward up the Nile and the Red Sea hills. The arrival along the lower Nile of the ancient Egyptian language, a member of the Afrasan family, ultimately traces back to these northward movements. The earliest ancestral form of the Semitic languages, another subgroup of the Afrasan family, may have been brought into Palestine-Syria by the Mushabian communities;

> alternatively, some later, as yet archaeologically unidentified movement of people may have taken Semitic from Africa into far southwestern Asia."[3]

So, if the so-called *Afro-Asiatic* or *Afrasan* language originated in Africa, what does it have to do with Asia? An adjunct to this is the claim that some people migrated from Asia, into Egypt, and they are responsible for the emergence of Egyptian civilization… Archaeologists Drs. Bruce Trigger, B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A.B. Lloyd addressed this claim in *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*, which was published in 1983 by the Cambridge University Press. Assumptions that were made in the past by the leading Archaeologists, like Sir Flinders Petrie, have been remarkably resilient:

> "Those once fashionable interpretations that automatically assumed that in antiquity all cultural changes resulted from the intrusion of new groups of settlers into an area have been eschewed. Petrie argued that the Fayum A culture represented a 'Solutrean migration from the Caucasus', which he stated was also the homeland of the Badarian people. The Amratian white-lined pottery was introduced into Egypt by 'Libyan invasions', while the Gerzean culture was brought there by 'the Eastern Desert Folk', who overran and dominated Egypt. Finally, Egypt was unified by the 'Falcon Tribe' or 'Dynastic Race', that 'certainly had originated in

[3] Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002) 38-39.

> Elam' and came to Egypt by way of Ethiopia and the Red Sea. Vandier has suggested that an invasion is necessary to account for the development of the Gerzean culture [and] has recently maintained that the Early Dynastic culture was introduced by a 'master race' coming from the east. Each of these suggestions has been specifically denied by other Egyptologists."[4]

The irrational beliefs that Dr. Trigger describes remain in peoples' minds today, however there is incontrovertible evidence that the emergence of a sedentary techno-complex in Nubia, which led to civilization along the Nile River, can be seen as the culmination of cultural changes that many indigenous human populations initiated about 12,000 – 10,000 years ago, when global temperatures began to rise, even predating such practices in Egypt. (The issues that have been discussed above should be kept in mind, at all times, when scholars read materials regarding Nubia and Egypt.)

This book will discuss human origins in Africa, and the major changes that came about as a result of the shift from gathering and hunting, to intensive agriculture and pastoralism. Importantly, not *all* human populations made this shift during the *Holocene*, however population dynamics have displaced such populations to peripheral zones, which is a pattern that generally accompanies agricultural praxis. In conjunction, the reexamination of the connections between Nubia and Egypt, often portrayed as separate "races" of people even though they remained in constant contact, (as Dr. Ernst Mayr once stated,

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[4] B.G. Trigger, B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A.B. Lloyd, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 2-3.

"*When Populations meet they may not bleed, but they always breed*") will be the focal point of the book.

Part of the generalized confusion that now exists can be explained by the fact that ancient Egyptians, around 2,000 BCE, conducted archaeological expeditions in order to develop the *King's List*; therefore, even in antiquity, confusion existed about the history of this culture area, even among the indigenous inhabitants. Apparently, the expeditions were not altogether successful, because they missed the burial site of King Scorpion at Abydos. King Scorpion's tomb was not discovered until the 1990s, by Dr. Günter Dreyer, thus King Scorpion was not included on the list. Even in antiquity, the King's List, which has been undoubtedly revered as a guiding document, was an incomplete, inaccurate record of Egypt's past.

The existence of writing may have played a role as well, since it is widely believed that a culture *with* writing was the more advanced, compared to a culture without writing. However, writing and civilization are not necessarily related: *Civilization* occurred at least 1,000 years, or more, before writing emerged.

Pharaoh Amenemhet I's Nubian Mother, Nefret

In the case of Nubia and Egypt, it is somewhat difficult to determine whether Nubia should be considered a literate culture, before the emergence of its Meroitic script, however Nubians had been 'Egyptianized' for centuries, and elites often wrote in hieroglyphic scripts as well. At the same time, for example, Amenemhet I, who took the Egyptian throne around 1991 BCE, initiating the 12th Dynasty, had a Nubian mother named Nefret. "A commoner by birth, Amenemhet was supposedly of Nubian

descent on his mother's side. She was named Nefret, and her reliefs and inscriptions carry no titles except that of 'King's Mother.[5] Amenemhet I had at least four known wives, and one of them was his sister, thus they shared a Nubian mother: Nefrutotenen, Sit Hathor-Yunet, Dedyet (Amenemhet's sister and wife), and Nefru-Sobek (who later became one of Egypt's female pharaohs). Amenemhet I's daughter Nefrusheri married his son Senwosret I, therefore the second pharaoh and queen of the 12th Dynasty had Nubian ancestry. "Amenemhet II (Nebkuare') the third king of the 12th Dynasty (1929 - 1892 B.C.) and the son of Senwosret I and Queen Nefrusheri"[6] had Nubian ancestry as well, through Nefret and Amenemhet I.

Sesostris I Khepekare, Nenseb-Djebet, Nefrusheri, and Nyetneb were all children of Amenemhet I; Queen Nefrutotenen was the mother of Sesostris I, who eventually became pharaoh of Egypt. Queen Sit Hathor-Yunet was the mother of Princess Nenseb-Djebet, and Queen Nefru-Sobek was the mother of Princess Nefrusheri and Princess Nyetneb. (Queen Nefru-Sobek was pharaoh of Egypt for a period of roughly four years c. 1799 – 1795 BCE, during the 12th Dynasty.) There is a similarity between the royal statues of the 12th Dynasty and the 25th Dynasty that visually reflects their common origin. Therefore, any attempt to unequivocally separate Nubians and Egyptians, and create separate histories for each civilization, presents immeasurable difficulties; however, this fact has not deterred scholars from persisting in their rigorous attempts to do so. When we critically examine the concepts of "Race" and *Egyptology*, and how they

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[5] Margaret Bunson, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Gramercy Press, 1991) 14-15.

[6] Ibid., 15.

have been used in the literature on Nubia and Egypt, some of the misrepresentations can be clarified, in part.

Up until the late 1960s (and even later, in some cases), many social scientists and scholars dismembered, classified and ranked the world's populations as "Races," as Vandier did in 1952, based on their presumed *phenotype* (the *observable* characteristics of an organism). This practice was common in the mainstream of anthropological studies on human origins, prehistory, and history. A case in point is provided by a pamphlet that was published by The Chicago Natural History Museum (formerly known as the Field Museum of Natural History), in 1946, by Dr. W. D. Hambly, Curator of African Ethnology. The pamphlet, entitled *The Races of Mankind*, claims that "For many years the word 'race' was freely and uncritically used by anthropologists, it has even been made to include the psychological and social qualities, and has often been confused with nationality, also it has been allied with ideas of inherent superiority or inferiority,"[7] in its *Description of Races* section. Hambly then states, "Let it be clear that by 'race' we mean a certain combination of heritable physical traits, without any implication of social status or psychological attributes."[8] Is that even *possible*? Observable 'traits' are inherently valued, or devalued, in social and cultural domains by the dominant group. Therefore, whoever has the power to subjectively decide which "heritable physical traits" are valuable, important, or somehow undesirable, certainly exercises a significant amount of social and political power.

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[7] Dr. W.D. Hambly, *The Races of Mankind* (New York: C.S. Hammond & Co., Inc., 1946) 275.

[8] Ibid.

While conducting research on the field of *Egyptology*, it appears that eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century researchers often viewed Nubia and Egypt as a continuum; an example of is provided by Giovanni Battista Belzoni's *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*, which was based on his 1815-17 fieldwork in the area, and published in 1820. Francois-Chrêtien Gau was the first researcher to publish a specific piece on Nubian archaeology in 1819, *Antiquités de la Nubie*. Archaeologists and adventurers paid considerably more attention to Egyptian sites than Nubian sites, during the Victorian era, in their quest for treasure. The way that Egyptology coalesced as a discipline explains, in some ways, how and why the dismemberment of this culture area may have occurred. (The construction of dams along the Nile River has also caused devastating losses, of Nubian archaeological sites, over the past century or so.)

As I noted in the *Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (Sage Publications, 2005), *Egyptology* is defined as the study of Ancient Egypt from the *Badarian*, c.4,500 BCE, to the Muslim invasion of Egypt in 641 A.D. (identified in Upper Egypt by Brunton and Caton Thompson in 1928, the *Badarian* is contemporary with *Fayum A* in Lower Egypt); this invasion brought the "Great Tradition" cultural practices that had coalesced during Egyptian civilization's five-thousand-year existence to an end (*e.g.* pyramid building and other related monumental architecture, worship of the pantheon of Egyptian deities, dynastic succession, hieroglyphic writing, and mummification). Although Athanasius Kircher made a valiant attempt to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs in the mid-1600s, the modern phase of the study of Ancient Egypt is believed to have

commenced after Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798. Napoleon employed a number of artists and scholars, an estimated 167 in total, who formed the *Commission des Arts et des Sciences* that included Claude Louis Berthollet, Gaspard Monge, Jean Michel Venture de Paradis, Prosper Jollois, Edmé François Jomard, René Edouard Villers de Terrage, and Michel-Ange Lancret; more than thirty from the commission died in combat, or from disease. A new organization that was to focus on the study of Egypt, the *Institut d'Egypte,* was formed by Napoleon in August of 1798 with Gaspard Monge serving as its president. Baron Dominique Vivant Denon (1742 – 1825) was urged to join Napolean's expedition by his protectress Joséphine de Beauharnais, who would later marry Napoleon. Denon was a diplomat, playwright, painter, and reknown society conversationalist; his drawings of and Medinet Habu are considered to be some of the most important in the history of Egyptology. Baron Joseph Fourier (1768 – 1830), who was an outstanding mathematician, facilitated the publication of *Description de l'Égypte* upon his return to France, and he held a number of prestigious posts including Prefect of the *Isère département* in Grenoble, and Director of the Statistical Bureau of the Siene; Fourier's publication represents an early attempt at compiling the tremendous amount of Egyptian material that was being discovered apace, making it widely available for other scholars to examine.

The British invaded Egypt shortly afterward and took possession of the priceless *Rosetta Stone,* which had been discovered in 1799 near a city known as RashÎd (meaning Rosetta), in 1801 when the French capitulated. The Rosetta Stone was inscribed with three scripts: Egyptian hieroglyphic, Egyptian demotic, and Greek, thus Greek served as a conduit

between the ancient Egyptians and the modern world. Thomas Young, a British physicist who had mastered twelve languages by the time that he was fourteen-years-old, is responsible for some of the first creditable decipherments of ancient Egyptian writing, and he shared his findings with Jean F. Champollion, who later became famous as the preeminent figure of the deciphering effort.

The Emergence of Modern Egyptology

A multi-talented circus performer, strong-man, and artist, turned explorer, named Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778 – 1823) conducted archaeological excavations at Karnak between 1815-17, and he entered Khafre's pyramid at Giza in 1818, making him the first known person to enter the temple in modern times. In 1820, Belzoni published *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries Within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia.* Belzoni's association with Henry Salt, the British Consul General who had retained him to procure Egyptian antiquities for the British Museum, often causes scholars to regard him as a treasure hunter; Belzoni's lack of 'scholarly' credentials, and his questionable archaeological agenda, generates a measure of concern and derision among Egyptologists. Girolamo Segato (1792 – 1936) went to Egypt in 1818 as well, and he crossed Belzoni's path, uncovering elusive artifacts that had been overlooked; Segato was a chemist, naturalist, and draftsman, and he was the first person to enter the Step Pyramid of Djoser, in modern times (the pyramid had been plundered, presumably, in antiquity like most of the pyramids). Segato was a prolific map-maker, in the service of Ismail Pasha, with his work leading him well into the

Sudan where he encountered the Kingdom of Chiollo and Wadi Halfa, during a forty-day walk. Although most of Segato's drawings were lost to fire, and his Egyptian treasures lost to shipwreck, he published *Saggi pittorici, geografici, statici, catastali sull'Egitto* (Pictoral, Geographical, Statistical, and Cadastral Essays on Egypt) in 1823, and *Alante momumentale dell'Alto e Basso Egitto* (Atlas of Upper and Lower Egypt) with Domenico Valeriano in 1837. In *The Discovery of Ancient Egypt*, Egyptologist Alberto Siliotti contends that:

> Although we can only judge his work on the basis of the extant documents, these are sufficient to throw light on his essential characteristics. An attentive traveler, an explorer of the course of the Nile and the eastern part of the Nubian Desert, an indefatigable and keen observer, a skilled draughtsman and map-maker whose work heralded the age of the scientific plan and accurate scale drawing, he was a talented and versatile person who was the first to enter and carry out a systematic study of Djoser's Step Pyramid at Saqqara. While the bad luck that dogged him in his Egyptian adventures means that it is not possible to form a complete picture of his contribution to the development of Egyptology, there is no doubt that he was one of the most outstanding explorers of the country in the last century. (Siliotto1998, pp. 188)

The most noteworthy contributors to the establishment of Egyptology as an academic discipline are Ippolito Rosellini, diplomat, explorer, and collector Bernardino Drovetti (1776 –

1852), Emmanuel vicomte de Rougé, Jean Jacques Rifaud (1786 – 1845, Drovetti's artist), James Bruce (1730-94), Owen Jones, Samuel Birch, Ludwig Borschardt, Heinrich Brugsch, Emile Brugsch (1842 – 1930), Adolf Erman, Hermann Grapow, Carl Richard Lepsius, Somers Clarke (1841 – 1926), Emile Amélineau (1850 – 1915), Jean Capart (1877 – 1947), Gaston Maspero (1846 – 1916), Edouard Naville (1844 – 1926), Victor Loret (1859 – 1946), Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, Sir Alan H. Gardiner, Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie (*Seriation* at Abydos), James Henry Breasted, Auguste Mariette, Amelia Edwards (1831-92), Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge (1857 – 1934), George Andrew Reisner (1867 – 1942), Howard Carter (1874 – 1939), Jaroslav Cerný (1898 – 1970), Dorothy Louise Eady (1904-81), and Walter B. Emery (1903-71).

Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797 – 1875) went to Egypt in 1821 to study tombs in the Valley of the Kings, the site of Karnak, and the sacred Gebel Barkal in Nubia, a mountain that appears to be shaped like a *uraeus* (the cobra that fronts the Egyptian king's crown). Wilkinson made contributions to Egyptian epigraphy by copying inscriptions, and being the first to identify the names of the kings with whom they were associated.

Rosellini (1800-43) and his brother Gaetano accompanied Champollion on an expedition to Egypt in 1828, and he directed the Italian committee as head archaeologist, while Champollion directed the French committee; supported by Leopoldo II, grand-duke of Tuscany and Charles X, King of France, their field study was called the Franco-Tuscan Expedition. Naturalist Guiseppe Raddi, artists Alessandro Ricci, Alexandre Duchesne, Albert Bertin, draughtsmen Nestor

L'Hôte and Pierre Lehoux were major contributors to the project. Champollion and Rosellini published the results of their expedition in *Monuments de l'Égypte et Nubie*. (Note: this visionary title clearly suggests that these scholars surmised that there was a significant relationship between Nubia and Egypt, however its significance has been overshadowed until recent times; today, we know that Nubia's influence on Egypt was far greater than many Egyptologists had suspected. For example, Nubian pottery has been unearthed and dated at 8,000 BCE, which provides evidence that sedentary life in Nubia predates the *Badarian*, when Egyptian civilization began to coalesce: a great deal of effort has been directed at creating a rigid separation between the two areas, or populations. Importantly, metals like gold were virtually non-existent above the Second Cataract (*cataracts* are the white-water regions of the Nile), therefore it was mined at Buhen or other Nubian sites, and carted off to Egypt by the ton. Thus, Egypt's reliance on Nubian products was perpetual, from the emergence of Dynastic Egypt around 3,250 BCE, until the invasion of the Persian Archaemenid Dynasty in 525 BCE.

Owen Jones (1809–74), a British engineer and draftsman, traveled to Egypt in 1832, made substantial drawings of Karnak, and published *Views on the Nile from Cairo to the Second Cataract* in 1843; Samuel Birch (1813-55) wrote the introduction to Jones's elaborate volume, which contained engraver George Moore's lithographs of his original drawings, accurately documenting the architectural details of the various structures that Jones had encountered during his expedition. After collaborating with Joseph Bonomi and Samuel Sharpe, Jones published *A Description of the Egyptian Court* in 1854. Scottish artist David Roberts (1796 – 1864) went to Egypt

shortly after Jones's expedition, in 1838; Roberts believed that Abu Simbel was the most impressive of all Egyptian temples, and his various paintings became the most popular of his time.

Lepsius (1810 – 1884) led an expedition to Egypt from Germany, commissioned by Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, in 1842; Lepsius was accompanied by artist Joseph Bonomi and architect James Wild, and he published *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien, 12 vol.* in 1859 (Egyptian and Ethiopian Monuments), which rivaled the work published by Fourier in scale. Emmanuel vicomte de Rougé (1811-72) worked with Lepsius to formulate a method for interpreting new Egyptian discoveries in a consistent manner; de Rougé was also curator of the Egyptian section at the Louvre in Paris.

Brugsch (1827–94) collaborated with Mariette (a cousin of Nestor L'Hôte) in the 1850s, and his major contribution to Egyptology is his work on the decipherment of the demotic script; Brugsch worked at the Berlin Museum as well, and held a number of posts related to Egyptology, including Founder and Director of the Cairo School of Egyptology. Mariette (1821-81), an archaeologist known for virtually destroying archaeological sites, went to Egypt in 1850 to look for ancient manuscripts, however he excavated Saqqara and Memphis instead, working in Egypt and sending antiquities to the Louvre until 1854. After returning to Egypt in 1858, he remained in Egypt and established the Egyptian Museum, after convincing the Ottoman Viceroy of Egypt of its merit. Mariette unearthed the temple of Seti I, as well as other temples at Edfu and Dendera; his work exposed material that dated back to the Old Kingdom, extending the range of Egyptian history that scholars could analyze.

Amelia Edwards (1831 – 1892) was a successful journalist who went to Egypt in 1873, and she inadvertently became enthralled with what she saw. Edwards published *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile* in 1877, and in 1882 Edwards founded the Egypt Exploration Fund (now known as the Egypt Exploration Society) in order to rescue ancient Egyptian monuments from decay, neglect, and vandalism. A wealthy British surgeon, Sir Erasmus Wilson, supported Edwards's efforts until her death, shortly after she completed an American speaking tour that consisted of 115 lectures, in 1889. Edwards strongly endorsed Sir Flinders Petrie in her bequest for the establishment of a chair of Egyptology at University College in London; it contained a proviso that "Flinders Petrie should be the first professor." Petrie (1853 – 1942) is considered to be "The Father of Modern Egyptology" by some Egyptologists. In conjunction, the archaeological methods that he developed extended beyond the Egyptian sites, and they are used by many of today's archaeologists. Petrie excavated Naqada, Tanis, Naucritis, Tell-al-Amarna, the pyramids of Senusret II and Amenemhet II, and the cemetery at Abydos, from 1895 to 1899 (*see* Methods in Egyptology).

Erman (1854 – 1937) elucidated and emphasized what he believed to be significant connections between ancient Egyptian language, the Coptic language, and Semitic languages; three of Erman's publications are considered to be among the most important that have ever been written on Egyptology: *Ägyptische Grammatik* (Egyptian Grammar), *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (Dictionary of the Egyptian Language), and *Neuägyptische Grammatik* (New Egyptian Grammar). Grapow (1885 – 1967) was a protégé of Erman, and his publications focused on ancient Egyptian medicine. Gardiner

(1879 – 1963), a student of Erman, is well-known for his interpretation of the *Narmer Palate* and his seminal 1927 publication, *Egyptian Grammar*, which is considered required reading for Egyptologists today.

Breasted (1865 – 1935) published the five-volume *Ancient Records of Egypt* in 1906, *A History of Egypt* (1905), *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (1912), and *A History of the Early World* (1916) before his 1919 expedition to Egypt, while he was a Professor of Egyptology and Oriental History at the University of Chicago. With the financial support of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Breasted established the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, in 1919.

Although a number of other archaeologists, artists, authors, and architects could certainly be included among these important figures in the history of Egyptology, their contributions to the discipline's development must be acknowledged; many of the Egyptologists who are working today will, undoubtedly, become part of this illustrious historic record.

Christianity and the Demise of Egyptian Belief Systems

The systematic study of Ancient Egypt has provided a wealth of information; however it is of a relatively recent vintage. The Edict of Milan, which was issued in 313 A.D. by the Roman Empire, established Christianity as the empire's official religion. As a result of this decree, representations of Egyptians gods and deities were attacked as symbols of "devil worship," and Egyptian artifacts were zealously destroyed by Christians. By the time that Napoleon's scholars arrived in

Egypt in order to conduct systematic studies, significant damage to Egypt's artifacts had already taken place; therefore, Egyptologists were forced to assess what remained with the understanding that looters, vandals, zealots, and adventurers had gotten to the sites ahead of them. When Sir William Matthew Flinders Petrie arrived in Egypt to excavate Abydos near the end of the nineteenth century, he was horrified by the methods and practices of Auguste Mariette (who had already conducted destructive excavations at the site) that he observed at Khafre's temple. For example, Mariette used gangs of soldiers and explosives to blast granite temple stones, rather than move them manually.

Valuable information was also lost to the 'standard practices' at the Cairo Museum, once artifacts were recovered from the excavations; one case involved the earliest known example of mummification that was ever found *in situ*:

> During his excavation of the tomb of King Djer (c.3000 BC), Petrie found part of an arm wrapped in bandages, later found to be wearing a set of four exquisite bracelets made of gold, lapis lazuli, amethyst and turquoise. After carefully examining the jewellery, he entrusted the precious burden to James Quibell, the Chief Inspector of Antiquities for Lower Egypt, to deliver to the Cairo Museum. However, the museum's assistant conservator was interested only in the jewellery, and threw away the arm and the linen, thus destroying the earliest evidence for mummification. As Petrie remarked,

> 'a museum is a dangerous place'. (Lorna Oakes and Lucia Gahlin 2003, pp. 40-41)

Mariette excavated the Serapaeum at Memphis as well, where the sacred Apis bulls had been buried; Mariette's methods included the use of dynamite, which inherently destroys aspects of an archaeological site that may have been of importance. By intentional contrast, Petrie invented *Seriation*, a method used by archaeologists to determine the sequences of artifact development, change, and frequency (or lack of frequency) in the layers of a site's strata. For example, artifacts found in the *lower* levels of the strata are considered to represent an earlier technocomplex or habitation period, in relation to the *upper* levels of the strata; seriation is a *Relative Dating* technique. Petrie first used seriation at Naqada, Hu, and Abadlya, and his method is now a widely used by modern archaeologists; at the very least, in this way, Egyptology certainly contributed to the study of humans as a whole. B.G. Trigger, B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A.B. Lloyd described Petrie's method in their ground-breaking *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*:

> "In an effort to work out a chronology for the graves of the Amratian and Gerzean cultures, Petrie developed his system of 'Sequence Dating', which constitutes the first substantial application of the principles of seriation in archaeology. This system was based on fluctuations in the popularity of different types of pottery from some 900 graves, each containing not less than five different types. On the basis of these fluctuations, Petrie assigned

> each grave to one of fifty successive temporal divisions, numbered 30 to 80. The time-scale is uncertain, so that it can only be said, for example that S.D. (Sequence Date) 40 is theoretically earlier than S.D. 41; further, there is no reason to believe that the interval between S.D. 49 and S.D. 50 is necessarily the same as between S.D. 60 and 61. It appears that the nearer Petrie's divisions are to the historic period, the shorter periods of time they represent."[9]

Petrie cut 900 strips of cardboard, each measuring seven inches long, with each representing a grave that he had excavated; on each strip, Petrie recorded the pottery types and amounts, as well as the other grave goods, which allowed him to compare the graves contents, and develop a relative chronology. Petrie's meticulous method represented a watershed event in both Egyptology and Archaeology, and seriation has undoubtedly enhanced the effort to analyze, preserve, and curate countless antiquities. In conjunction with seriation, a variety of methods are now used by Egyptologists to locate archaeological sites, including aerial photography, electromagnetic acoustic sounding radar, resistivity measurement, and thermal infrared-imagery in order to locate geological anomalies that merit further investigation; Polymerase Chain Reaction (PDR, a method of DNA molecule duplication that yields more material for analysis) and CAT-scans are now used to study the genetic relationships, or the lack thereof, between the human remains

[9] B.G. Trigger, B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A.B. Lloyd, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 4-5.

that have been unearthed and the pathology of their diseases; computer programs that allow users to create 3-D reconstructions of sites, and that allow users to type hieroglyphs are widely used by researchers, epigraphers, and students of Egyptology today. Relative Dating methods like Stratigraphic Palynology, and Absolute Dating methods, including Thermoluminescence (TL), Radiocarbon (C-14, Electron Spin Resonance (ESR) are among the methods that can now be used to date artifacts, faunal, or floral material that is associated with Egyptian archaeological sites. These investigative tools have definitely enhanced Egyptologists' ability to study the world of the Ancient Egyptians.

A new method that is available to Egyptologists yielded some compelling results in August 2004. Gilles Dormion and Jean Yves Verd'hurt reported that they had found an unknown corridor that leads to a burial chamber, in the tomb of Khufu, by using ground-penetrating radar; if they are correct, they may have solved an age-old mystery as to where Khufu was actually buried. However, as of now, Dormion and Verd'hurt have not been given permission to excavate.

The Dominance of Sir William Flinders Petrie, And Dr. George Reisner

Dr. George A. Reisner is credited with initiating the study of Nubia in modern times, and his assessment of the Nubians continues to confound our attempts to clarify the Nubia-Egypt relationship in antiquity. In conjunction, most scholars who study Egypt consider the work of Sir William Matthews Flinders Petrie as exemplary; however, is it possible

that these two towering figures may have misrepresented the populations under study? Scholarly work on Nubia and Egypt that commenced after Petrie and Reisner were no longer working in these locales drew heavily, if not disproportionately, on their theoretical biases. If Petrie and Reisner were wrong about the origins, practices, and relationships between these sites, then the implications could be sobering.

Dr. Stuart Tyson Smith has drawn the prevailing interpretations of the relationship between Nubia and Egypt into question recently, in *Wretched Kush: ethnic identities and boundaries in Egypt's Nubian empire.*[10] I intend to, first of all, deconstruct the claims of these major figures in the study Nubia and Egypt, and present a more accurate representation of these ancient locales. Dr. Bruce Trigger, along with B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor, and A.B. Lloyd concluded, from their archaeological studies, that there was no evidence of a migration into Egypt by a large population, which contradicts earlier claims that the Egyptians were not indigenous Africans.

There appears to have been a fascination with the western Asia and Ethiopia, as the sites where civilization originated before it allegedly, somehow, *migrated* into Africa. Both Petrie and Reisner were convinced of the cultural superiority of the Egyptians, and the cultural inferiority of the Nubians: this was certainly in accord with the "racist" notions that existed in their time, and which persist to date. What is virtually absent from their assessments is any notion that the civilizations that they excavated were indigenous, or that African civilization developed *in situ*. The use of archaeological

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[10] Stuart Tyson Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic identities and boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003) 1.

sites for identifying populations has its strengths and weaknesses; making distinctions on the basis of *pottery* and the frequency of certain grave goods alone is problematic, especially when it comes to grouping populations into so-called "Races." The capricious nature of the racial folk taxonomies, which Europeans have promoted since the 1600s (*e.g.* the "Dynastic Race"), renders such a practice untenable as well. *Invasion theories* have enjoyed a great measure of popularity among scholars. It is important to note here, again, that archaeologists Trigger *et al.* emphasize that there is no evidence of a large scale migration into Egypt, during the timeframe that civilization in Africa developed. Petrie was not aware of any archaeological sites that dated before the Third Dynasty, therefore, the material that he worked with was far later than the material that is related to the emergence of civilization in Africa. With this in mind, we can now move on to the coherent discussion of human origins in Africa.

Chapter 1

An Abridged Explanation of Human Origins, and the Emergence of Civilization

The emergence of the human animal, and *civilization* (defined as a sedentary technocomplex with the existence of a bureaucracy), are inextricably linked. East Africa, the culture area under study here, is preeminent in both cases according to the most recent fossil discoveries and archaeological data. Researchers in the physical sciences have been able to develop *The Human Genome*, and we are now more cognizant of the relationship between all life forms on planet earth. The earliest life forms, known as *cyanobacterium*, emerged about 3.2 billion years ago; often referred to as *blue-green algae*, they are photosynthetic microorganisms that can be classified as bacteria or plants. To some, this may appear to be an ignoble start for humanity, however nature does not operate based on such value judgments, *per se*.

Biology and Evolutionary Theory

Humans have a tell-tale sign from their distant past that cannot be deconstructed: their vertebral, or spinal, column. This feature is shared with a species that emerged during the Cambrian Period (c. 570 million years ago), *Pikaia gracilens*, which was a favorite topic of the late Dr. Stephen Jay Gould, who was one of the world's most prominent evolutionary biologists. Dr. Gould emphasized that *P. gracilens* was the only organism from the Cambrian Period that used the vertebral

column, as an adaptive strategy and survived; thus, had *P. gracilens* gone extinct, we would not be here. The good news is, neither would the rest of the vertebrates, so humans were not singled out by nature! Thus, our existence is merely a chance occurrence, which may be difficult to digest, for those who believe that humans are somehow *divine* or chosen. Also, it may be difficult to embrace the genetic connection between humans, and all of the other life forms, in our ecosystems. As Rebecca Cann has often said, the geneticist who is known for her research on *The Mitochondrial Eve* which was the 'bombshell of the 1980s, without Darwinian evolution, "*Biology doesn't make sense*." Therefore, it is with this understanding that we must examine the emergence of humanity, and civilization, in Africa. Importantly, chordates and vertebrates do not photosynthesize as plants do:

> "Organisms that move about and ingest food (but do not photosynthesize, as plants do) are called animals. More precisely, the multicelled animals are placed within the group called *Metazoa*. Within the Metazoa there are more than 20 major groups termed *phyla*. One of these phyla is the *Chordata*, animals with a nerve chord, gill slits (at some stage of development), and a supporting cord along the back. In turn, most chordates are called *vertebrates*, because they have a vertebral column. Vertebrates also have a developed brain and paired sensory structures for sight, smell, and balance."[11]

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[11] Barry Lewis, Robert Jurmain, and Lynn Kilgore, *Understanding Physical Anthropology and Archaeology* (Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth, 2007) 95.

Classification is a necessary tool for the interpretation of the fossil record, which presents us with a number of obstacles that must be considered. Charles Darwin emphasized that we should not view "*the earth's crust as a well-filled museum*," that is, we cannot expect the fossils to simply present themselves, in chronological order! Fossilization is a process that occurs by chance, at best, therefore it is somewhat irrational for anyone to expect that a neat fossil chronology should already exist. There have been some remarkable discoveries in paleoanthropology, which have certainly contributed to our understanding of the human past, however most can only infer what their relationships are using *phylogenies* and *cladograms*. The *Phylogentic Systematics* approach to understanding the human past correlates time periods with the emergence of various fossils (*e.g. Australopithecus afarensis* K-Ar, potassium-argon, dated at 3.2 million years ago, or *Homo erectus* at 1.8 million years ago), placing them in a tree-like configuration. This is a common method that anthropologists use to discuss the various fossils, and their presumed relationship with one another; although any degree of certainty remains somewhat subjective, *certain* anthropologists take strong positions on their beliefs, and become unflappable! In my opinion, the fossil record is not complete enough for such self-righteousness: quite often, we are working with mere fragments. The fossil record, as it now stands, is more suited for study, interpretation, and discussion rather than absolutes. *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*, which will be discussed in this chapter, provides a timely case in point.

Cladistics and the Emergence of Vertebrates

The classification method known as *Cladistics* is defined as "an approach to classification that attempts to make rigorous evolutionary interpretations based solely on the analysis of certain types of homologous characteristics (those considered to be derived characteristics)."[12] Thus, the *cladogram* does not have a time component related to the evolution of the various species under study; rather, it is an analysis of shared derived characteristics. Whether one species is *ancestral* to another is not included on a cladistic chart, which focuses on *homologous* traits (descent from a common ancestor, as opposed to analogous functions, *e.g.* birds and butterflies both have wings, however they are derived from different evolutionary trajectories).

For our purposes here, I will focus on tracing the vertebral column from the Cambrian Period to the present, emphasizing the major development that led to, well, 'us'. *Pikaia gracilens* gave rise to a myriad of aquatic species, and eventually one of them ventured into a new ecosystem about 405 million years ago: *Ichthyostega*. This hearty amphibian inhabited Greenland, and it is considered to be one of the first animals, if not the first, to inhabit land habitually. By 200 million years ago, early mammals like *Rodentia* (rats) were well adapted on earth (which is probably why we can't get rid of them no matter what). As the earth's plates shifted, dinosaurs and other huge animal species radiated until about 65 million years ago, at the end of the Cretaceous Period, which was also the onset of the Paleocene. During the Cretaceous, there was a fluorescence of angiosperms

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[12] Ibid., 98.

(flowering plants) which contributed to mammalian radiation, through the symbiotic relationships that developed.

The *Paleocene* (65 million years ago.), *Eocene* (55 m.y.a.), *Oligicene* (34 m.y.a.), *Miocene* (23 m.y.a.), and *Pliocene* (5 m.y.a.) are known as the 'Golden Age' of mammalian radiation, initiated by the *Prosimians*, *Anthropoids*, and *Hominoids*. For example, the lemurs of Madagascar (and only Madagascar) date back to the *Paleocene*; their prehensile hands, stereoscopic color vision, and adaptive variation exemplify some of the traits that *hominidae* share.

Environmental pressures, such as volcanic activity in the Great Rift Valley of East Africa, separated species to the point where they became reproductively isolated, leading to further speciation. It is under these conditions that bipedal locomotion (walking upright on two feet habitually) may have been selected for, along with a host of other behavioral and anatomical changes that took place in *hominidae*; from this succession of events, the human animal's ancestors emerged. *Plesiadapiforms*, like *Purgatorius* (c. 63 m.y.a.) are often cited as possible contributors to the primate lineage, since "the dental formula of *Purgatorius* is 3:1:4:3, meaning that the genus is generalized enough to have given rise to the first clear primates that appear in the fossil record of the Eocene."[13] *Plesiadapiforms* are not considered to be 'true' primates, and a gradual environmental warming trend between 65-54 million years ago permitted the radiation of placental mammals, which appear to have out-competed their predecessors:

[13] Craig Stanford, John S. Allen, and Susan Antón, *Biological Anthropology* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006) 271.

"The fossil record of the Eocene reveals the first true primates, those that possess the bony characters by which we identify living primates. We also see the origin of the strepsirhine-haplorhine split during this epoch. The two main superfamilies of Eocene primates, the *Adapoidea* and *Omomyoidea*, appeared at the beginning of the Eocene. They flourished during the Eocene of Europe, North America, North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia but declined during the Oligocene. In particular, they possess slightly larger brains than *plesiadapiforms*, eye sockets positioned on the front of the face, a complete postorbital bar for greater protection of the eye, an opposable big toe, and nails (rather than claws) at the ends of their fingers and toes."[14]

An important species arose in the Fayum that is classified in *Propliopithecidae*, and designated as the genus *Aegyptopithecus* and dated at about 33 million years ago; "In life, *Aegyptopithecus* may have looked something like the living howler monkey of South America. Unlike the *parapithecids*, both the *oligopithecids* and the *propliopithecids* had the 2:1:2:3 dental formula of living Old World higher primates."[15] (DNA evidence that compares apes with Old World monkeys indicates that their common ancestor lived during the onset of the Miocene epoch; the biochemically determined DNA distance between humans and apes ranges from about 96% to 99% identical.)

[14] ibid.

[15] ibid., 278.

According to recent molecular evidence, the first apes emerge around 25 million years ago:

> "Living ape species are few in number and limited to just four genera: *Hylobates* (the gibbons and Siamangs), *Pongo* (the orangutan), *Gorilla* (the gorilla), and *Pan* (the bonobo and the common chimpanzee). However, the fossil record of hominoid primates reveals a surprisingly diverse succession of adaptive radiations. Molecular evidence suggests that the monkey and ape lineages diverged about 25 million years ago. Fossil apes first appeared during the Early Miocene, approximately 23 to 16 million years ago. At that time, hominoids were almost totally restricted to Africa. All apes possess molars with five rounded cusps connected by a pattern of y-shaped fissures and grooves."[16]

The genus *Proconsul* (c. 18-20 m.y.a.) combined the features of monkeys and apes, exhibiting the Y-5 dental pattern, but its mode of locomotion was similar to that of a monkey; until recently, this genus was thought to be the last remaining ancestor that was held in common, however "*Morotopithecus bishopi* may be a better candidate. In 1997, paleoanthropologists Daniel Gebo and Laura MacLatchy named a new species of Miocene ape *Morotopithecus bishopi*, from the 20.6-million-year-old site of Moroto in Uganda."[17] This type of discovery enhances our

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[16] ibid., 283.

[17] ibid., 285.

understanding of the convoluted evolutionary developments that preceded the genus *Homo*, and presents a challenge for 'absolutists' as well.

Shifts in the earth's plates have been moving land masses closer together, and in some cases further apart, since the breakup of *Pangea*; by about 17 million years ago, Africa and Eurasia were connected by land, which allowed the first known hominoid primates to migrate out of Africa (*e.g.* a gibbon-like species found in China by Harrison and Gu). This led to the divergence of African and Asian ape species by 14 million years ago, and changes in locomotion. While *brachiation* became prevalent for Asian apes, African hominoid species like *Kenyapithecus* relied on knuckle-walking. "One species in particular, *Kenyapithecus wickeri*, may be closely allied with the lineage leading to the hominids."[18]

The migration of *Hominoids* caused these pioneer species to adapt to the new environmental demands, leading to more speciation during the Miocene, including *Ramapithecus* (India), *Shivapithecus* (India and Pakistan), *Dryopithecus* (Spain), *Gigantopithecus blacki* (China and Vietnam), *Ouranopithecus* (Greece), *Samburupithecus* (Kenya), and *Oreopithecus* (Italy). This fluorescence of hominoidea continued until the terminal Miocene, when only a comparative handful of species survived as r-selected monkeys and *k-selected* apes diverged:

> "Animals that reproduce more quickly (those that are *r-selected*, with each female having many offspring during her lifetime at short interbirth intervals and making less maternal

[18] ibid.

investment per offspring) could colonize areas faster and rebound from population declines more quickly and thoroughly. Monkeys reproduce more quickly than apes and so had an advantage in colonizing new areas. (Apes are strong *k-selected*, exhibiting the opposite reproductive characteristics of r-selected animals.) In contrast, apes seem to have stuck with their shrinking, forested homes. Their numbers decreased along with their habitat and continue to do so today. Only one group of apes seems to have overcome the issues of locomotion and reproduction to move into new, more open habitats. This lineage eventually evolved into humans."[19]

Biochemist Allan Wilson and anthropologist Vincent Sarich are responsible for providing some groundbreaking research findings on human origins: molecular phylogenetic analyses using protein *albumin*, in 1967. Their work tracked the accumulation and change in genetic differences between species, over geologic periods time. Subsequent research by Morris Goodman analyzed the divergences of *cercopithecines* and *colobines* at about 16 million years ago, gorillas in Asia and Africa about 14 million years ago, gorillas from chimps about 8 million years ago, and humans from their common ancestor with chimpanzees at about 6 million years ago. Chimpanzees split from *Bonobos* (a Central African species that displays more human-like behaviors than their close relative, including upright walking) as recently as 2.2 million years ago. (In terms of

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[19] ibid., 289.

geologic periods of time, that is just yesterday!) As a result of these findings, the relationship between *Homo sapiens sapiens* and other primates deserves a second look, that is, evolution cannot be dismissed as easily, in the face of such compelling empirical data. Rather than 'appearing whole' as many of our creation myths may have claimed, the human animal appears to have resulted from a succession of adaptive radiations. Yet, there can remain a place for divinity in this process of evolution, since Charles Darwin stated in his *Recapitulations and Conclusions* of 1881, the final version of *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, that the original organisms were made by the "*Creator*," and that they evolved from there. Darwin's work represents a mode of inquiry, not an absolute, and research continues to provide evidence that can either support or refute evolutionary theories:

> "The fact that the ideas put forward by Darwin have changed, and are changing as new research is done, does not mean that they were wrong. Darwin's ideas were simply incomplete. Each day as we add to our knowledge base we move closer to an even more complete understanding of natural selection. The development and transformation of ideas as new information is discovered is one of the hallmarks of science. Indeed, this is the central facet of science that proponents of "creation science" and "intelligent design theory" ignore. What physical evidence could be put forward to demonstrate that God (or some intelligent force) created the diversity of life on earth? In the absence of objective evidence supporting creationism or intelligent

design, scientists concluded that natural selection, which *is* supported by objective evidence, better explains the diversity of life."[20]

Evolutionary Theory, and Cognitive Dissonance in 1859

The concept of *Evolution* initiated a great deal of cognitive dissonance during its public introduction in 1859, and it continues to do so even today. Darwin's 1881 revision of his theory, which allowed for a "Creator" of the first organisms, went ignored; thus, people surmised that one had to be either an 'Evolutionist' or a 'Creationist'. Creationists 'roughly' promote the *Great Chain of Being* notion (that every organism was created perfectly and whole by God), which cannot account for *speciation*.

Early *Hominins* and Bipedality

Paleoanthropologists today 'generally' concluded that humans and chimpanzees diverged from a common ancestor about 6 million years ago, which makes *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* a very compelling fossil. Provisionally dated at about 7 million years ago, two intriguing possibilities are presented by this species: that of the earliest known bipedal *hominin* (classified as an immediate human ancestor), and that of hominin activity in Western Chad, which is a considerable distance from previous hominin sites in Africa. The material is

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[20] Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember, and Peter N. Peregrine, *Anthropology* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007) 37.

bit too incomplete to determine whether *S. tchadensis* was bipedal but there is the possibility:

> "Around 7 million years ago a primate called *Sahelanthropus tchadensis* lived on the shores of the lake, where its bones were fossilized and recovered by Michel Brunet and his colleagues in 2001. *Sahelanthropus*, represented by an almost complete skull, has a unique mix of hominid and hominoid traits. While the skull itself is hominoid, with a small brain, large brow ridges, and wide face, the teeth seem more hominid-like, especially the canines, which do not project below the tooth row. For now, we have to wait for additional evidence to know whether *Sahelanthropus* was the first biped ape."[21]

A contemporary species found in Kenya, *Orrorin tugenensis*, is dated at 6 - 5.8 million years ago, and some anthropologists contend that its femur definitely indicates that the species was bipedal, at that time; however, this conclusion is being challenged by other anthropologists. There is a general consensus among anthropologists that *Ardipithecus kadabba*, found by Dr. Yohannes Haile Selassie while working with Dr. Tim White in Ethiopia and dated at 5.8 million years ago, was a bipedal . "What makes *Ardipithecus kadabba* unique is the combination of apelike dentition along with evidence of bipedal locomotion and an overall hominid-like skeleton. The base of the

[21] Ibid., 95

skull shows the foramen magnum positioned underneath the skull, just as in definitely bipedal hominids."[22]

The positioning of the foramen magnum is critical, and it is almost 'conclusive' evidence of bipedality. This is because the angle at which the spinal column, and the skull, intersects virtually dictates what the habitual pattern of locomotion must be. In this way, anthropologists can be more certain as to whether *Ardipithecus ramidus* dated at 4.4 million years ago is a better candidate for the 'first bipedal hominin', as opposed to *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*, whose evidence of bipedality appears to be more subjective.

There were costs and benefits associated with bipedalism though, including a radical rearrangement of the vital organs within the skeletal structure, sequestered ovulation and the loss of estrus, and the loss of the grasping hallux which made tree climbing easier in exchange for the delicate patella and flatter feet. The hands became available for a myriad of tasks that quadrupeds were not adapted for, and current theories suggest that a rapid development of language propelled these selective advantages to the fore. The combination of linguistic skills with prehensile abilities gave early s more adaptive options than ever before, affording them a new level of affability. This change in behavior is now associated with the development of the frontal lobes of the brain, a trend which fostered the unprecedented growth in cranial capacity from about 3 million years ago to the decline of *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*, the species that possessed the largest brains on average.

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[22] ibid.

From about 2.5 million years ago to 1.8 million years ago, the brain size for s grew from about 500 cubic centimeters to 1000 cubic centimeters, which is exceptional in evolutionary terms; a great deal of emphasis is placed on the cranium, especially the relative thickness, the presence of a *Supraorbital torus* (brow ridge), or a 'bony chin' for classifying various 'human species' for the sake of comparison. However, all of those feature can be found in human individuals today, although the brow ridge or flaring *Zygomatic arches* are considered to be 'primitive' human features: how 'primitive' are they, if they are here today? They seem current to me, although I can understand that the intention behind this designation may have been interpretive, possibly... But, if people want to insult someone's 'intelligence', they will normally call them *a Neanderthal.* (We need to work on this characterization, I think.)

A General Chronology of *Hominidae*

A generalized *Hominidae* chronology (including major *Hominins* thought to be in the human line) includes:

- *Australopithecus anamensis* dated at 4.2 million years ago
- *Australopithecus afarensis* dated at 3.9 – 2.9 million years ago
- *Australopithecus africanus* dated at 3.5 – 2 million years ago
- *Homo habilis*, the first known tool-maker emerges at about 2.5 million years ago

- *Australopithecus (Paranthropine) aethiopicus* dated at 2.7 -2.5 million years ago, *Australopithecus garhi* dated at 2.5 million years ago
- *Australopithecus (P.) boisei* dated at 2.3 – 1.2 million years ago
- *Australopithecus (P.) robustus* dated at 2 – 1.5 million years ago, followed by *Homo erectus* at about 1.8 million years ago (first to leave Africa after domesticating fire 2.0 - 1 million years ago)
- *Australopithecus sediba*, dated at 1.9 million years ago
- *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* about 600,000 years ago in Europe and the Middle East
- *Archaic Homo sapiens* about 500,000 years ago and
- anatomically modern *Homo sapiens sapiens* (that's us) about 125,000 years ago in South Africa, at the site of Klasies River Mouth (*Homo sapiens sapiens* arrive in Europe about 40,000 years ago in France, at the Cro Magnon Rock Shelter site in the Dordogne region).

The combination of bipedality, meat eating and the development of language were probably the major contributors to the trend of increasing cranial capacity, and symbolic behavior, in conjunction with the numerous intangible environmental factors that were always in flux. Dean Falk of Florida State University supports the so-called *Radiator Hypothesis*, which plausibly maintains that the *emissary foramina* grew larger in order to foment brain cooling (delivering cooled blood to the

brain during bipedal locomotion, thereby allowing the brain to grow in s, unlike quadrupeds). I have always accepted this hypothesis as a visionary explanation. The crania and *endocasts*, as far back as *A. africanus* c.3 m.y.a., support the *Radiator Hypothesis*. The larger brain however has its limitations; this may explain the demise of *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* in part, because at some point it may have had an impact on their differential reproductive success. If the brains of their offspring became too large to pass through the birth canal successfully, a higher infant mortality rate could have resulted from this problem. Some anthropologists have estimated that the cranial capacity of *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* may have reached an average of about 2000 cubic centimeters, which is larger than the estimated average cranial capacity for *Homo sapiens sapiens* (about 1800 cubic centimeters). Also, the interaction of immigrating *Homo sapiens sapiens*, and *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* could have exposed Neanderthals to diseases that they had no immunity for, which probably contributed to their demise around 28,000 years ago. However, Dr. Svante Paabo of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary has conducted research on *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* genes, and concluded that 1-4% of non-African modern humans, that live today, have Neanderthal genes: but this theory remains controversial.

One question that always arises as a result of this is: were Neanderthals more *intelligent* than *Homo sapiens sapiens*? In their time, *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* introduced a new tool industry, the *Mousterian*: a feat that had not occurred for about a million years. In conjunction, *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* is associated with humans burying their dead with flowers, possibly for the first time. Clearly, this suggests that *Homo sapiens*

neanderthalensis represents a change in human perception and cognition, at the very least.

Some anthropologists remain steadfast in their belief that *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* merely diverged from a common ancestor. Recent DNA analyses suggest that the divergence occurred sometime between 500,000 years ago and 50,000 years ago. However, should we rely on DNA samples, from a limited number of specimens, to give us the answer? Based on the behavioral similarities of the two species, I am of the opinion that this question must be examined more critically, with a much larger sample size. The fact that anatomically modern humans, *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*, and *Homo erectus* may have coexisted presents some analytical difficulties! In conjunction, there are modern humans who are walking around planet earth today who have a brow ridge (*supraorbital torus*), lack a bony chin, or have an occipital bun: why is that? Well, it appears that phenotypic characteristics, which are associated with one species, often occur in another as well. Although anthropologists would like to have 'black and white' answers for the origin of anatomically modern humans, the path that led to *us* appears to be genuinely complex.

Archaeological excavations that have been conducted, worldwide, reveal that the gradual shift from gathering & hunting to *Civilization* is characterized by a variety of innovative *technocomplexes*. For example, during the Upper Paleolithic, the *Chatelperronian*, *Szletian*, and *Aurignacian* technocomplexes (centered in modern Hungary) were spread across Europe by *Homo sapiens sapiens*, possibly displacing *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*. By 24,000 years ago, the

Gravettian and *Solutrean* technocomplexes emerged in southwestern Europe, and later central Europe. The *Aurignacian* technocomplex appears to have become the most prevalent, as the fabulous cave paintings associated with the *Magdalenian* appeared about 18,000 years ago, and as the *Aurignacian* technocomplex spread into western Asia as well (*e.g.* the Zagros Mountain of modern Iran).

The Emergence of Food Production in Africa

Although food production probably occurred in Japan about 12,000 – 13,000 years ago, according to the archaeological evidence from Fukui Cave (Jomon pottery), the Ancient Near East is where most of the studies of early food production have been focused. There could be two cogent reasons for this; the first is a *biblical* one, that is, early Western archaeologists may have believed that the *Holy Land* is where civilization first emerged, and the second reason could be that after the emergence of food production, the development of monumental architecture in conjunction with documented historical events, directed archaeologists toward the Ancient Near East as well. Africa has the best documented history in the world, because writing was invented there first (3,250 BCE at the site of Abydos, Egypt), followed by other writing systems in the Ancient Near East, Asia, and Mesoamerica.

However, *Africa* has only been considered as one of the earliest locales for pottery in relatively recent times. The use of pottery is regarded as a definitive step in food production, sedentary living, and the emergence of 'bureaucratic' civilization. As a result of the origin of *Hominidae* exclusively in Africa, and the subsequent spread of humans around the world, the African

origin of humanity continues to reverberate, as a starting point for researchers; at the same time, the literature of the past is inundated with derogatory characterizations of Africans, with Nubia being at the forefront of such misrepresentations.

In conjunction, African cultural products are devoured by the Western world, without any recognition of their African origin; for example the Nubian pyramid on the back of the U.S. one dollar bill, and the Washington Monument in D.C. exemplify a reverence of African inventions, but at the same time George Washington enslaved hundreds of Africans, and he was in the business of characterizing them as subhuman: they were noted as 3/5 of a person in the Constitution of the United States in his time. Author Mark Twain probably expressed this *anticathexis* of African people by Europeans best, noting that he was deeply moved by the Jubilee Singers and African American musicians, however he lamented the fact that since they were American "negroes" he would be unable to fully express his approval. However, Twain did what he could to bring attention to the disparities that African Americans faced, I think, to the best of his ability. Twain's Janus-faced sentiments are not unusual: they are pervasive, and what has been touted as 'research' regarding Nubia and Egypt is not merely detached observation; rather, it is rife with preconceived notions that are based on the prevailing attitudes of the researcher's culture. This view of Africans in the modern world differs markedly for that of antiquity, as Adrianne A. Baytop noted in *Black Aesthetics: the Black-is-Beautiful Tradition and the Janus-Faced Image*; Baytop states that the Greek Herodotus, who is known as 'The Father of History', wrote that "Ethiopians (this was the Greek name for Nubians) are said to be the tallest and handsomest men in the world," at that time. It was not until the 15th century that the derogatory

connotations of Africa (in conjunction with the Atlantic Slave Trade, as explained by Dr. W. E. B. DuBois in his dissertation) became prevalent in the Western world. It is now time to put the distorted representation of Africa in antiquity to rest, and turn to the coherent evidence.

> As we critically examine Nubia & Egypt from the Late Paleolithic, the level of influence that Nubia excerpted upon Egypt will certainly become more apparent. In fact, the gold mines at Nubia's Buhen, and to its east near of Wadi Allaki, virtually defined dynastic Egypt: without the tons of gold that were plundered by Egyptians, Nubia may have retained this massive repository of precious metal.

Chapter 2

Nubia & Egypt, From the Late Paleolithic

It seems curious that Nubia is usually ignored, when it comes to the world's earliest food production; this appears questionable because as early as 10,000 years ago, there is evidence that grind stones and pottery were being used; this suggests that grain was being processed in a way that is usually associated with *Food Production*. Intensive gathering is also a possibility, but since there is no definitive explanation for how *Agriculture* began, one can only postulate this. Prehistoric Nubian archaeological sites can tell us 'something', but what that is continues to be interpretive.

Prehistoric archaeological sites in Nubia and Egypt have been identified and dated from about 25,000 - 5,000 years ago, prior to the Khartoum Neolithic, when writing was invented. These sites, in Lower Nubia, include:

- the *Khormusan* (25,000 – 17,000 BCE),
- the *Halfan* (18,000 – 15,000 BCE),
- the *Gemaian* (15,000 – 7,000 BCE),
- the *Ballanan* (13,000 – 11,000 BCE),
- the *Qadan* (13,000 – 4,000 BCE),
- the *Arkinian* (7,000 BCE),
- the *Shamarkian* and *Post-Shamarkian* (c. 7,000 – 4,000 BCE and 4,000 – 3,000 BCE, respectively),
- the *Akban* (5,000 – 3,000 BCE), and
- a *Khartoum Variant* (4,000 – 3,000 BCE).

Until about 12,000 BCE, these prehistoric sites evinced a subsistence pattern that is characterized by specialized hunting and collection, according to J.D. Clark's research. There is a shift to intensive hunting and collection during the Ballanan, Sebekian, and Upper Paleolithic Complex G. The incipient domestication of plant and animals commenced during the Qadan and El-Sikh, and by the Shamarkian and El-Kao, extensive farming was underway.

Clark excavated a cemetery at *Gebel Sahaba* which is dated at 12,000 BCE, noting that a significant number of individuals died violently; this suggested to him that population growth was responsible for such bellicose interactions. "The most interesting of the Qadan sites is No. 8905 from Toshka West, which dates c. 12,500 BCE. Large numbers of grinding stones were found in that site as well as a few lustrous-edged lunates apparently used to cut grass or a similar substance containing silica. This suggests that some grass, possibly barley, was being harvested."[23] Grinding stones from Khor es-Sil II, that are dated at 15,000 BCE, indicate that grain was being used extensively.

The populations that are associated with the Khartoum Mesolithic were active in the Nile valley as early as 9,000 years ago. This culture was designated as the 'Early Khartoum' by A.J. Arkell who conducted archaeological fieldwork where the Nile converges, in the 1940s. It has been documented that in the Arkin Region near the Second Cataract, between Shamarki and Nag el-Arab, that Nile floods increased from about 9500 – 9000 BP, before they subsided for a few thousand years when

[23] Bruce Trigger, *Nubia Under the Pharaohs* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1976) 26.

desiccation dried the region, compromising its suitability for human habitation according to the research on the prehistory of Nubia and Egypt conducted by author Béatrix Midant-Reynes. Another period of desiccation which started around 8,000/7500 BP, was probably responsible for the movement of desert populations toward the stable water sources of the Nile River: "In about 8000/7500 BP, the arrival of a new arid phase had the effect of emptying the deserts, forcing human populations to settle closer to the surviving sources of water. The Nile was about to serve once more as a refuge zone."[24]

Subsistence Patterns in Nubia 9370 + 110 BP

At this time, polished axes appear in the archaeological record and pottery, "the complete outer surface of which is decorated with an impressed matting motif, is omnipresent."[25] Sorurab 2, a Khartoum Mesolithic site near Saggai that has been radiocarbon dated to about 9370 + 110 BP, contained charcoal from human activity in its layers from this, period according to the findings of A.M.A. Hakem and A. Khabir in 1985. Fishing provided a major portion of foodstuffs for the population at this time, and harpoon fragments in association with fish bones were found *in situ* at Tagra with *Pila werni*, according to D. A. Adamson in 1982. In conjunction, pottery was certainly being produced during the Khartoum Mesolithic:

> "Although no complete vessels have survived, the original forms can be reconstructed.

[24] Béatrix Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt* (Malden, Oxford, & Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 1992) 90.

[25] Ibid.

> Consisting of simple hemispherical bowls and globular pots. The dotted line style of decoration is particularly common on pottery made from the mineral-based fabric typical of the Khartoum Mesolithic, while 75 per cent of the vessels made from clay with inclusions of plant material are decorated around their middles with cord impressions, reminiscent of the 'basket imitations' that are noted by Arkell at Khartoum but are unknown at Saggai. According to Clark, the lack of this motif at Saggai suggests that the site of Early Khartoum represents the northernmost limit of this cord-impressed decorative tradition."[26]

Attempts have been made to trace the so-called "diffusion routes" of harpoons, which first appear at Ishango around 11,000 – 8,500 BP, *unpolished* pottery, and *polished* pottery, however "It therefore appears difficult, considering the lack of large number of precise dates, to establish the routes of diffusion taken by these earliest African pottery producers."[27] The fishing economy and pottery production took place from Mauritania, the Central Sahara (at a time when the climate was not harsh, as we now know it to be), and spread even as far as Kenya. It was once thought that the Nile Valley was where pottery was first produced, however Midant-Reynes now contends that it has been "ousted as the home of the first pottery"[28] by I. Zarattini's research findings. Therefore, a reassessment of the significance

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[26] ibid., 97.

[27] ibid., 98.

[28] ibid.

of *Nubian*, and other African, technocomplexes upon Egypt's coalescence is definitely invited by this view. Importantly, the *Khartoum Mesolithic* 'classification' remains somewhat problematic, "the Early Khartoum material lends itself readily to the concept of Neolithicization, as defined my M.C. Cauvins. For convenience, however, we retain here the term Khartoum Mesolithic simply because it is now enshrined in the literature."[29] Contemporary artifacts, from the Sebilian sites like Kom Ombo, are dated at about 13,000 – 9,000 BC, and Dr. Bruce Trigger contends that:

> "This culture is markedly different from contemporary ones in Lower Nubia. One archaic feature is the use of ferrocrete to make tools, which may explain the crude aspect of the industry as a whole. It is suggested that the Sebilian may represent an intrusion of a Tshitolian related culture from central Africa. This challenges the traditional view that the Sebilian developed from the Middle Paleolithic tradition of southern Egypt. The final industries to be defined are the Arkinian (c. 7500 BC) and the Shamarkian (5750 – 4500 BC). These are known only from one location on the west bank of the Nile near Wadi Halfa and a Saharan origin has been suggested for both of them. On the

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[29] Béatrix Midant-Reynes, *The Prehistory of Egypt* (Malden, Oxford, & Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 1992) 93.

other hand, these cultures also share features with the earlier Halfan and Ballanan cultures."[30]

Archaeologists' Misrepresentation of Nubians

Trigger describes an increasingly sedentary technocomplex in the southern area of the Sahara during the so-called Khartoum Mesolithic, just before the emergence of full-scale food production, and he contends that "The apparently *negroid* (my emphasis) inhabitants of the site also gathered the fruit of wild trees such as *Celtis integrifolia*."[31] *Apparently negroid*? (This type of racist characterization is so common in the 'literature' that has been published, regarding Nubia and Egypt, that such claims certainly deserve some reassessment! The practice of dividing human populations into "*Races*" that never existed automatically undermines empirical validity.)

Pottery has been radiocarbon dated at between 8,000 – 7,000 years ago at the sites of Ennedi, Ténéré, and Ahaggar, and its designs are indigenous, according to Trigger. Southwestern Asian domestication practices may have influenced African technocomplexes, for the only indigenous African domesticated animals were the cat and the donkey, and "the oldest direct evidence of food production south of Aswan comes from the Khartoum Neolithic culture whose type site, Shaheinab, is located at the west bank of the Nile about 50 kilometers north of Khartoum. This site has been radiocarbon dated 3500 to 3100

[30] Bruce G. Trigger, *Nubia Under the Pharaohs* (Boulder: Thames & Hudson Ltd., Westview Press, 1976) 27.

[31] Ibid., 28.

BC."[32] Was the pottery at Ennedi, Ténéré, and Ahaggar used merely for gathering plants? It is doubtful and although evidence of plant domestication in Nubia may be somewhat scarce from the period between 8,000 – 7,000 years ago, a shift to sedentary habitation and pottery strongly suggests that agriculture was in place, at some level.

Egyptomania and the Denigration of Nubia

The practice of dividing the A-Group into the Early, Classic, and Terminal stages based on the presence or absence of so-called "Egyptian trade goods" seems questionable: defining a population, based simply on its presumed 'level' of trade with another? Here, we can see that *Egyptomania* is at work, which presumes or suggests that contact with the Egyptian "race" somehow fostered 'progress' or 'civilization' in Nubia. Actually, the A-Group pottery shows more sophistication in its design, and variety, than the imported "Egyptian" pottery (but maybe not as hard). A-Group graves contained the bones of domesticated sheep, goat, and cattle; therefore it is rather certain that sedentary and pastoral practices were well underway *before* trade with Egypt was. There were an increasing number of 'Egyptian' artifacts flowing into Nubia during the Gerzean, a time when Egypt underwent significantly higher levels of stratification, and specialization. 'What if' the Egyptian goods were mass-produced, and cheap by comparison (*e.g.* an ancient Wal-Mart), and they were useful for subsistence? The Egyptians had to trade, in order to get exotic products that were not available locally, before they had the military power and arrogance to take what

[32] ibid., 29.

they wanted. The major gold deposits were at the Second Cataract near *Wadi el-Allaqi* (or *Wadi Allaki*), and to the south in the Nubian Desert, not in Upper Egypt. Thus, gold (in the quantities that are usually associated with Egypt) was essentially a foreign product for Egypt, and trade expeditions to the Levant and Punt are well documented in Egyptian iconography. Egypt *did* have massive quantities of grain thanks to the Nile floods, though, which was a widespread form of currency at the time.

Trade During the Gerzean Period

A-Group burials in Nubia were the same as burials in Predynastic Upper Egypt, so we are looking at a culture area, rather than two separate 'cultures', as it were. "The A-Group culture shared with Predynastic Egyptian ones a concern with burial rituals and grave goods that was hitherto foreign to Nubia. They were normally buried in a contracted position, on the left side and with the head facing south; the same orientation as that of Predynastic Upper Egypt."[33] Stone slabs were used, and placed in oval sub-rectangular patterns; the body was wrapped in leather or fur. (This is the forerunner of the Angreeb in Nubia, upon which the body would be placed, wrapped in an animal hide.) During the Gerzean, there is an explosion of Egyptian trade goods that made their way into Nubia. Raw materials would have been sought after by Egypt, which was virtually bereft of ivory, prized woods, metals, and building stone during predynastic times (before they started their raids on Nubia). Nubia probably served as a crossroads for trade goods, and the A-Group prospered as a result of their strategic location. In one

[33] ibid., 36-37.

of the A-Group graves that are dated at 3,000 BCE, a gold-handled Egyptian mace was found. This is definitely a royal symbol, especially since it is roughly contemporary with the oldest known pharonic symbols from King Scorpion's tomb, in Abydos, dated at 3,250 BCE. "A series of animals portrayed in low relief on the handle of the small mace was executed in the same style as animals found on slate palates from the reign of Narmer, making it one of the masterpieces of Early Dynastic art. Unfortunately, the mace was stolen from the Egyptian Museum soon after it was discovered and it has not been recovered."[34]

It is possible that during this period of increased trade, Egyptians were supporting favored leaders in Nubia, against their close rivals for power. Egypt was also vigorously hiring Nubian mercenaries as warriors, thus 'cultural identity' and 'nationalism' did not exist, as we understand it in modern terms, at the time. The so-called A-Group sites appear to cease during the First Dynasty, and it is unclear whether this was the result of low Nile flooding, the circumvention of Lower Nubia by the Egyptians in their trading activities (cutting out the middle-men), or military action in Nubia by centralized Egyptians. We must keep in mind that at this time, around 3,000 BC, Egypt was relatively small in land mass, about ¼ or less of its modern day territory; it hugged the Nile river: Egypt held no territory in the Sinai Peninsula during the Old Kingdom, its territory being exclusively in Africa, and a relatively small part of it, at that.

Without question, Egypt was 'on the rise' around 5,000 years ago as far as its architectural and imperialist development; maybe the people of Lower Nubia made *a beeline* to Egypt, in

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[34] ibid., 42.

order to participate in the military or trade opportunities? Even *Writing* was invented there during this heady time, at 3,250 BCE. It must have seemed like 'the place to be', at the time, because what had coalesced in Egypt had never been seen. It also appears that Egyptian civilization included a meritocracy; that is, a person could rise to an extremely high status in the society, from humble beginnings. In conjunction with the way that women were treated in ancient Egypt (*Maat*), where they were virtually on par with men, and never left Egypt because the rest of the ancient world would have seemed barbarous to them, we can see some compelling reasons for emigrating that would have been attractive to Nubians.

The Emphasis on Pharonic Egypt

The emphasis on Pharonic Egypt, during the historic period, has marginalized the *prehistoric* periods that led to its development, at the expense of an understanding of Nubia's role therein. Archaeologist Dr. Maria Carmela Gatto has been working on the critical prehistoric periods during the Holocene in Nubia (challenging the 1977 William Yewdale Adams boundaries of Nubia, which was defined as stretching from the First to the Sixth Cataract, not including the eastern and western desert regions). Gatto published *The Nubian Pastoral Culture as Link between Egypt and Africa: A View from the Archaeological Record* in 2009, as a participant in the Manchester Museum's *Egypt in its African Context* conference. This visionary paper clarifies a number of misconceptions about Nubia, and its impact on the development of what has become known as 'Pharonic Egypt'. In conjunction, Gatto's *Egypt and Nubia in the 5th–4th millennia BCE: A view from the First Cataract and its*

surroundings (also published in 2009) analyzes formative periods that ultimately led to the emergence of the so-called 'Zero Dynasty'. Gatto asserts that:

> "Nubia is Egypt's African ancestor. What linked Ancient Egypt to the rest of the North African cultures is this strong tie with the Nubian pastoral nomadic lifestyle, the same pastoral background commonly shared by most of the ancient Saharan and modern sub-Saharan societies. Thus, not only did Nubia have a prominent role in the origin of Ancient Egypt, it was also a key area for the origin of the entire African pastoral tradition."[35]

The 'greatness' of ancient Egypt is captivating, and it appears that nearly everyone has been trying to claim its origin for themselves, at some point, in order to identify with their legacy; this includes major western scholars, indigenous Africans, and "Black" scholars. According to Gatto, "Nowadays support for the Egypt-Africa connection comes from different fields of research, mainly archaeological, linguistic and genetic, but to what extent and in what way Egypt interacted with the African world still remains to be clarified."[36] To me, this notion is a problem, because Egypt IS the so-called African world: Egypt is in Africa! Egypt did not have to "interact" with Africa, because it is IN Africa! Apparently, the *good old anticathexis* of Africa

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[35] Maria Carmela Gatto, The Nubian Pastoral Culture as Link between Egypt and Africa: A View from the Archaeological Record (Oxford: Hadrian Books Ltd., 2009) 26.

[36] Ibid., 21.

(due to the notions that people who are indigenous to the continent must be, somehow, inferior or incompetent when it comes to *Civilization*) is alive and well, in the 21st century. The wrong-headedness of dissociating Egypt from Africa smacks of cognitive dissonance… Thus, scholars are in awe of Egypt, the pyramids, the rich archaeological treasures, and devoting their lives to its preservation, while disassociating it from Africa, as though it was founded and built by aliens. (That 'theory' is alive as well too, although *not one alien has been verified,* yet.) But what generalizations does the archaeological evidence support?

Pastoralism in Nubia

Pastoralism existed in Nubia at least 7,500 years ago, but not in Egypt; however, this form of subsistence was apparently ideal for areas where desertification had already taken place; supported by gathering and fishing, this adaptive strategy moved northward along with burial customs, and a distinct material culture. "This corresponds to the spread of cattle pastoralism along the whole Nile Valley. Cultural boundaries, as unbounded constructs, move through time for different reasons. Generally speaking, during the prehistoric period and part of the historic period Nubia as a cultural territory included the Nile Valley between the First and the Fourth Cataract and the nearby deserts"[37] Nubia's technocomplex was preeminent long before the emergence of what is known as 'Egypt', and we are probably looking at an extension of Nubians' adaptive strategy that, unknowingly, grew into something that had not been imagined: but how?

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[37] ibid., 22.

There were preexisting proto-civilization sites in Mesopotamia and the Levant, dating back to Çatal Hüyük and Sumer, as well as walled cities like Jericho (dated at 7,500 BCE) that shared burial practices with Anatolia; Egypt's hierarchical structure embodied similar features, but differed in its worldview and cultural product designs: they may have 'looked' different, however their *function* was similar. A different pantheon of deities, environment, subsistence pattern, and resources were all factors that contributed to the material culture, which is being analyzed thousands of years after the fact. Nubia's settlement pattern was more 'cattle-based' than 'plant-based', in comparison to Anatolia and Mesopotamia around 7,000 years ago:

> "The Wadi el-Arab discovery confirms autochthonous cattle domestication in Africa prior to the arrival of the domesticated sheep/goat from the Levant (*c.* 6000 BC; Close 1992). It also, and for the first time, locates such early evidence of domesticated cattle along the Nile Valley and not just in the desert. As a matter of fact, the deserts and the Nile Valley were both part of the territory seasonally in use by the population at that time. Morphological and genetic research seems to provide further support for the topic. According to Grigson (1991, 2000) Egyptian cattle of the 4th millennium BC were morphologically distinct from Eurasian cattle (*Bos taurus*) and Zebu (*Bos indicus*), meaning that African cattle may have been domesticated from the local wild."[38]

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[38] ibid., 22.

This is not a definitive timeline for animal husbandry in Nubia and Egypt, since it could be the result of some genetic variation of an earlier divergence, or speciation, for "Genetic studies indicate that the wild cattle in Eurasia and in Africa diverged 22,000 years ago and suggest an autochthonous domestication for the latter."[39] Dr. Christopher Ehret places the origin of animal husbandry and plant domestication in this region at the onset of the Holocene, which corresponds with some of the early pottery in Nubia. In conjunction, changes in the decoration of pottery may reflect a shift in the regional subsistence pattern, according to Gatto:

> "Because pottery decoration is one of the most common cultural markers, and it clearly has this meaning throughout all of Nubian history (Gatto 2002a), this change in the pottery decoration may be symptomatic of other changes in the society and economy of the Early Holocene Nubian population. The change may be the decisive moment when cattle herding became the main economic activity, giving origin to the Neolithic in Nubia and in Africa. The homogeneous pottery tradition may be related to the new 'Neolithic' society. The southern Dongola Reach, as well as the Laqiya region and the Wadi Howar, were left aside from the Nubian territory at this time; they had their own traditions with both northern and southern influences. Conversely, the Fourth Cataract and the Nile-Atbara region, demonstrate a

[39] ibid.

> heterogeneous assemblage of ceramics, indicating that these regions were areas of interface between the Nubian tradition and the Khartoum tradition to the south. The arrival in Africa of domesticated sheep and goats from the Levant around 6000 BC seems to confirm a local and earlier domestication of cattle; in fact, only populations already able to manage domesticated livestock could have adopted the newcomers so easily, spreading them very rapidly all over the Sahara."[40]

After plant domestication became a staple in Nubia around 7,500 BCE, a dietary shift is observable in the skeletal remains from that time; as far back as the Late Paleolithic, cattle had more than a 'practical' significance in Nubia, and this trend continued through later periods of social stratification, as "the pastoral component became fundamental to the construction of social identity and religious beliefs. In this sense cattle held a special place, not only because the Nubians had had a strong relationship with wild cattle since the Late Palaeolithic, but because, from a pastoral point of view, the cattle were far more precious than caprines."[41] Changes in climate during the 5th millennium BCE had an impact on the movement of Nubian populations to the north, where they took the resilient technocomplex that they had developed, therefore Nubians were in Middle Egypt spreading their cultural practices, beliefs, material wares, and genes long before the emergence of 'Pharonic' Egypt:

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[40] ibid., 23

[41] ibid. 24.

> "During the 5th millennium BC Nubian cultural boundaries became more fluid, probably as a result of another major climatic variation. The monsoon regime retreated further south, this time affecting also the Khartoum region of Central Sudan, and forcing the local population to adopt a pastoral nomad (Neolithic) lifestyle. At the same time, winter Mediterranean rainfall reached the Gilf Kebir plateau allowing pastoral nomads the use of that ecosystem as well. Although to date there are no records of this kind, winter rains might have influenced other areas of North-eastern Africa. With the aim of enlarging their land availability and expanding cultural and economic relationships with northern regions, such as the oases region and the Delta (including the Fayum), the Nubians moved north towards Middle Egypt. This spreading trajectory is well recorded along the desert routes of the Western Desert parallel to the river, connecting south-north the Second Cataract."[42]

The influence of Nubian pottery design is present at both Tasian and Badarian sites, and they also have a shared emphasis on funerary spaces, a ritualizing pattern that continues to develop as resources accumulate exponentially, with the rise of social stratification and armies: "They are clearly directed to the dead and not to the living. For the community the necropolis was already a demarcated space. In the desert, instead, the landscape is marked by stone structures and stone tumuli. They

[42] ibid.

function as a medium for monumentalising and ritualising the desert."[43] Nubia burials continues to include animal offerings, while this practice appears to have ceased in Egypt sometime during the Badarian, thus a 'cultural bifurcation' appears in the archaeological remains. This change has been characterized as "A-Group" and "B-Group" in the past by Dr. George Reisner, who theorized that the populations represented distinctly different groups. Since Nubia has been 'understood as a pastoral society', and not a 'civilization', the notion of a complex, hierarchical structure during prehistoric times is normally dismissed… However, that assumption is no longer *a given*:

> "Contrary to what has previously been thought, pastoral societies were able to develop social complexity to attain, in some instances, a state-level society, and the kingdom of Kerma represents the ultimate result of the social stratification achieved by the Nubian pastoral society. In Nubia the process started as early as the Early Holocene delayed-return hunter-gatherer cattle-keepers, and developing during the Early and Middle Holocene. At this period, evidence for social inequality is primarily detected in the funerary sphere. A rapid increase in social stratification occurred during the 5th and 4th millennium BC as result of the new cultural relations between the Nubian world, through Badari, and the Mediterranean world, via the Delta. Being part of this process made it possible for the Badarian culture to reach a high

[43] ibid., 25.

level of complexity, which in few centuries developed into the regional polities of Hierakonpolis, Naqada and Abydos and thereafter to a unified Egypt (*c.* 3100 BC). If the Egyptian Predynastic took advantage of the Nubian social development process, Nubia did the same in return. In Lower Nubia at least two polities evolved during the second half of the 4th millennium BC, namely at Sayala/Naga Wadi and at Qustul. These Nubian kings (or, more precisely chiefs) adopted the same royal iconography as that of the Egyptian kings."[44]

The Differentiation of Nubia From Egypt

The differentiation that proceeded between Nubians and Egyptians was not absolute, in the 4th millennium BCE, however over time, the differential subsistence, architectural, and hierarchical patterns (*i.e.* grain in Egypt became its major currency, and people were paid with the artificial abundance to work, or fight) make a sharp distinction seem more salient. While Nubians built a massive mud-brick *Deffufa at Kerma* which has deteriorated significantly (this as a major city, with monumental architecture about 4,000 to 5,000 years ago, that was also known as *Kush* to the Egyptians), Egyptians to their north built in mud-brick and stone, thus the stone monuments have survived (some of the mud-brick structures like the massive walls of Kha'sekhemwy's funerary complex, built around 2,640 BCE have survived as well), and 'all eyes became

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[44] ibid., 25.

fixed on Egypt'. Indeed, the accomplishments are astounding, by any measure, but they did not occur in isolation; rather, an accumulation of forces led to the emergence of civilization in Egypt: none of them can be disregarded. In significant ways, Nubia and Egypt are inseparable, because of the one's influence upon the other. The structure of *Identity* emerges as a factor, of self and other. Dr. Donald B. Redford notes that even before the emergence of state-level societies, distinctions were being made and lines were being drawn between populations:

> "The *ID* cannot tolerate differences in another human being, for they constitute a threat. The individual perceives a need to hate as well as to love, and a state seeks only to control and channel both emotions. Even before the appearance of the 'state', whatever that is, the human community began to consciously create a rationalizing mythology to explain the existence of 'them' (as well as 'us'). Eventually the great archetypal myths (which all have their roots in parochial communities of agricultural subsistence), provided a moral basis for the individual's working out of his or her love and hatred. If and when a complex society is born with a political and economic 'center' and a supporting 'periphery', the former simply gives a voice to the base instincts of the latter: it does not change them. The spontaneous xenophobia that results is well attested by the ancient Egyptian experience. Egyptians were well aware of color differences. They perceived themselves as a russet hue, whereas Asiatics were of a paler

yellowish color. Southerners are depicted as darker (chocolate brown or black) than Egyptians and Asiatic; the very name *Njsi*, 'Nubian', originally meant 'bronzed/burnt' in the same vein as the Greek AίθίοΨ."[45]

An Analysis of Egyptian Color Symbolism

Curiously, Egyptian color symbolism raises questions about identity and color, because black (*Kem*) had a number of meanings: it was used to paint statues of the deceased pharaoh and it signified his unification with Osiris (*e.g.* Mentuhotep II's funerary statue from c. 2010 BCE). *Kem* symbolized the dead, the god Osiris, the fertility of the Nile River, the god Anubis, and the Underworld. But when it came to Egyptian women, they were symbolized on murals as being yellow (*Ketj*), while Egyptian men were portrayed as red (*Deshier*). Now, what are the probabilities that all Egyptian men were 'red' in skin color, and Egyptian women were 'yellow' in skin color? There is more variation within populations, than between populations according to the American Anthropological Association's statement on "Race". 'Red' was also used to portray *foreigners*; so essentially, it is a mixed bag, when it comes to color symbolism and identity in ancient Egypt. Modern "Racial" classifications have been imposed on ancient Africa for centuries, and it was probably irresistible for racists to impose their socialization on the ancient, and modern, Africans. And they had help from the ancient

[45] Donald B. Redmond, *From Slave to Pharaoh: The Black Experience in Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004) 5-6.

Egyptians, as far back as the Old Kingdom, when the diverging Egyptians started stealing the gold deposits of Nubia.

It is obvious that the ancient Egyptians were taking 'liberties' with their representation of people, including themselves, because it is virtually impossible that all Egyptian women were yellow: they would need some yellow fathers in there, don't you think? But we are short on Egyptian paintings of 'yellow men', because that was not their projected image: here, we are encountering the difference between *what people say that they do, and what they actually do* (which is critical). Obviously, the Egyptian color symbolism served as a pejorative representation, as opposed to a statement of 'fact'. As Redford pointed out, there was a great desire in early civilization for people to 'differentiate' themselves. (A stone-age culture that currently exists in *Brasil* known as the *Poturu*, first discovered in 1995, expressed this idea also: they wore a bamboo *Poturu* shaft in a hole that they cut into their chins to differentiate themselves from their rainforest neighbors. This population had no contact or knowledge of the Western world, therefore their ideology was not influenced by outsiders.) Are humans inherently narcissistic? If so, it would help to explain the anxiety that perceived differences in appearance seems to foment; however, when the components of artificial abundance and social stratification became part of the equation, we see increasingly bellicose behaviors, and a recurring 'rise and fall' pattern, for populous civilized societies. The denigration and misrepresentation of Nubia is escalated by the later dynasties, and the combination of this practice along with the internalized modern "Racism" of Western scholars, has obscured the facts of Egyptian civilization's emergence. As we examine the interaction between Nubia and Egypt, a more balanced account of Nubia's essential

role begins to appear. Gatto concludes, and I concur, that: "Nubia is Egypt's African ancestor."[46]

One of the most important and tireless researchers on Nubia, over the past few decades, has been Dr. Bruce Beyer Williams, of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute; his work is nothing less than phenomenal. Along with Dr. Geoff Emberling, he revived the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition (OINE) in 2007, excavating in what is today northern Sudan: no fieldwork had been conducted there for nearly forty years, and the political conditions were not ideal in 2007 (*see* The Oriental Institute 2006-2007 Annual Report). The staff of this Nubian Expedition included Carol Meyer, Lisa Heidorn, and Tom James from the Oriental Institute's staff, University of Chicago students Debora Heard, Justine James, and Randy Shonkwiler, New York University student Meagan Ingvoldstad, University of Toledo Professor of Geology James Harrell, inspector Mahmud Sulieman Bashir, Director General Hassan Hussein Idris, and Director of Excavations Salah Mohammed Ahmed of the National Corporation of Antiquities and Museums in Sudan. (As you may be aware of, the country has been split into since that time, and a new nation-state known as *South Sudan* has now emerged, with its capitol at *Juba* in the south; there is a plan underway to move the capitol.) The Merowe Dam Project was underway, with the intention of flooding the region around the Fourth Cataract of the Nile, which is:

> "A region in which virtually no archaeological research has been conducted before the dam

[46] Maria Carmela Gatto, *The Nubian Pastoral Culture as Link between Egypt and Africa: A View from the Archaeological Record* (Oxford: Hadrian Books Ltd., 2009) 26.

> project began. That alone is a remarkable fact -- there are few such blank spots in the archaeological map of the Near East and its margins. It is even more remarkable considering that the Fourth Cataract is within the heartland of the Napatan dynasty, which eventually conquered Egypt and ruled as its Twenty-Fifth Dynasty in 750-650 B.C. Among the most surprising results was the extensive occupation of the later Kerma period (Middle to Classic Kerma, ca. 2,000-1,500 B.C.). The polity centered at Kerma, known as Kush in antiquity, has long been known to have posed a military threat to Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period (1650-1550 B.C.) Settlement throughout the Fourth Cataract of the Middle Kerma period, however, raised the possibility that Kush was far more extensive, and powerful, over a longer period of time, than previously recognized."[47]

The team incurred a number of logistic difficulties, because the dam project had displaced at least 50,000 people, or more, and the Sudanese government was in the process of trying to compensate individuals in a climate of hostility; one of the local "tribes" called the Manasir would not even allow any archaeological work to take place in their territory. Another team, from the Gdansk Archaeological Museum helped the Oriental Institute team, by allowing them to excavate one of their concessions: Hosh el-Guruf. At this site, fifty-five large

[47] Geoff Emberling and Bruce Williams, *The Oriental Institute 2006-2007 Annual Report* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2007) 78-79.

grindstones were found which strongly suggests that it was a site for gold extraction (too big for grain processing); also, a seal from the Napatan period was found. This may have been a major site for the processing and distribution of gold in antiquity, for "Gold from Upper Nubia is mentioned in the inscriptions of Middle Kingdom Egypt, but no source has previously been identified. When our work was presented at the annual Fourth Cataract Conference in Lille this year, it catalyzed a discussion around goal extraction that revealed that most missions in the Fourth Cataract had recovered some installations related to gold extraction."[48]

The Oriental Institute team also excavated part of the Al-Widay site, excavating thirty one of the ninety graves that they were able to identify. It appeared that the ram was the favored animal in this region, as opposed to cattle, and carnelian, faience, and scarabs were unearthed suggesting that extensive trade networks were in place, during the Classic Kerma Period.

The Origin of Egyptian Royal Practices

In 2010, Nubia blogger Michael Brownstein interviewed Dr. Bruce B. Williams at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute; Brownstein was a teacher in the Chicago Public School system for over thirty years, before he retired and continued to conduct research on Nubia. (Brownstein started teaching his students about Nubia, and found that the topic had been ignored in the curriculum; this inspired him to start asking some cogent questions about why that is the case.) In the interview, Dr. Williams noted that "Narmer" and "Menes" may

[48] Ibid., 85.

not have existed, because they had not been recorded in Egyptian records; also, Dr. Williams is of the opinion that the famous A-Group Qustul incense burner provides the evidence that what we now identify as the 'royal' practices of the Egyptians is actually of Nubian origin. Gatto's rediscovery of the royal scene at Gharb Aswan predates dynastic Egypt, and the rock drawings there provide evidence that before the Scorpion Tableau was carved, royal iconography and practice already existed:

> "Four of the five boats are nearly identical in shape and details. They all have high, rounded prows and sterns, with two cabins and a chequered band on the upper side of the hull. The fifth boat is placed rather awkwardly at the bottom of the tableau, beneath the boat above which the royal group figures. Although the prow and stern are as high as those on the other boats, they are not broad and rounded but narrow and almost pointed. This boat has only one cabin and that chequered band is missing. Because of the 'subordinate' position of this boat and the fact that it is the first boat encountered when coming from the wadi, it seems to represent an 'introduction' to the tableau as a whole. Three boats are placed in a row, and the one associated with the royal group occurs first. In respect to content, it allows it not only to be considered the most important element of the tableau, but also immediately directs the attention of somebody coming up from the wadi to the essential part of the tableau. The position of the dog centrally

above the boat must be the reason for the relatively low position of the animal compared to the king behind him. Although this obviously links the dog to the boat, it must also be considered as part of the royal scene in a strict sense. Above the second boat were two human representations which unfortunately are now chiselled away. The last boat seems to have nothing represented above it. The large boat above the three just discussed has probably been drawn and are higher position in order to incorporate a previously existing drawing of a giraffe. Although no difference in patina can be observed between the giraffe and the boat, the animal is drawn in a far more sketchy style compared to all the other elements of the tableau and is clearly made by a different hand. The final but most important element of the tableau is the role of four males in front of the first boat. They are placed at a very edge of the rock wall, which is heavily eroded in this spot, and it is therefore possible that the row originally consisted of more persons. They are holding a rope and are obviously in the position of towing the boat behind them, although the rope they are holding is not connected to the boat itself. Although they have been interpreted in different ways they are, in our opinion, related to boat processions which seem corroborated by the scene under discussion."[49]

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[49] Stan Hendrickx and Matia Gatto, *A Rediscovered Late Predynastic-Early*

The importance of such finds cannot be underestimated, in any attempt to analyze the predynastic impact of Nubia on the development of pharonic Egypt, which has become disproportionately revered. Thus, the A-Group incense burner, with its pharonic carving from the Qustul cemetery L, is part of a group of artifacts that clarify predynastic relationships in the *region* (it has already been established that both Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia sprang from shared traditions). It is important to forget the "modern" boundaries of Sudan and Egypt, for they are irrelevant in the study of African antiquity: there were thousands of years of 'free exchange' from the onset of the *Holocene*.

The critical feature that explains the impact that Nubia had on Egypt during the predynastic period is the existence of the *serekh*, which eventually developed into the stone monuments that are associated with pharonic Egypt: as Dr. Williams has noted, it is a Nubian invention. "This was a large building erected in their early dynastic period (2920-2575 B. C. E.) having an elaborate paneled façade, with two square towers and intricate recessed doorways. Constructed of costly wooden materials, the *serekh* served as the royal residence, the *PERO* or palace. The royal tombs in Abydos and the step pyramid in Saqqara used the *serekh* design."[50] The *serekh* had a written symbol that was the forerunner of the Egyptian cartouche, used only for royal names: "This was an Egyptian symbol serving the names of the earliest rulers, *Djet*, or *Wadj*, the third pharaoh of

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Dynastic royal scene from Ghard Aswan (Upper Egypt) (in Sahara 20/2009) 148-149.

[50] Margaret Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Facts on File, 2002) 365.

the first dynasty (2920-2770 B.C.E.), adopted the *serekh* design as his personal symbol of power. The *serekh* appears on a stela from his reign and denotes his royal status. The ruler's name was inscribed above the *serekh* symbol in a rectangle, topped by the Horus sign. This device was the first cartouche form."[51]

Dr. Williams pointed out, in his publication *Excavations Between Abu Simbel and the Sudan Frontier: the A-Group Cemetery at Qustul: Cemetery L*, that the Qustul cemetery L artifacts often predated those found at Abydos, which is one of the earliest sites (if not the earliest) for pharonic symbolism in Egypt:

> "Early tombs in the cemetery, such as L 24, contained pottery and stone vessels that had generally been dated before the First Dynasty. A group of painted bowls and a stand from slightly later tombs that belonged to the early and middle period of the cemetery also dated to the late Predynastic period. Other evidence from Tura, Beda, and elsewhere indicated that Cemetery L began well before the First Dynasty, and the scratched *serekhs* from the cemetery related directly, in date as well as type, to Kaiser's group of Predynastic palace façades. The cemetery was mostly earlier than the modest "Dynasty 0" tombs of Ka, Narmer, and B ½ (Iry-Hor), at Abydos and not contemporary with the later great monuments of the First Dynasty. The larger tombs of Cemetery L actually equaled or

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[51] Ibid.

> exceeded these in size and elaboration. Apart from other "firsts" in representation and art, the Qustul incensed burner stands out at this writing, not as a provincial imitation of some unknown Egyptian monument but as the first self-evident pharonic monument from the Nile Valley, the first unequivocal representation of a pharoah in his person, the first definite linking of the pharaoh's figure with the Horus falcon, palace façade, and boat that later became the sacred bark, the first self-evident representation of an event linked with the royals sacrifice, and the first datable monument-ceremonial object that compares with the slate palettes and maceheads of Egypt."[52]

Dr. Williams noted that "the wealth was vastly superior to any contemporary tombs in Nubia or Egypt down to the royal cemetery at Abydos; this includes the thousand painted bowls, a hundred stone vessels from the cemetery, twenty-two storage jars in one tomb, and local objects in unusual numbers and quantity."[53] The pharonic symbolism that appears, for the first time in the archaeological record here, includes a symbolic reference that predates the Iry-Hor *nesu* with Horus association at Abydos (who is believed to have ruled before the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt). The most stunning find is the seal with the name "Ta-Seti" that yields the most staggering implication,

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[52] Bruce Beyer Williams, *Excavations Between Abu Simbel and the Sudan Frontier: the A-Group Cemetery at Qustul: Cemetery L* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1986) 2.

[53] Ibid.

regarding the relationship between Nubia and Egypt in prehistory: and here is the significance. As Dr. Christopher Ehret pointed out in *The Civilizations of Africa*:

> "By 3,500 BCE, a cultural world of sacral chiefdoms and petty sacral kingdoms was gradually coming into being in Nubia, and the ideas that undergirded these social formations also took hold in the far south of Egypt. Recent archaeological work shows that this political and cultural outlook then spread from southern Egypt northward into Lower Egypt after perhaps 3300, culminating in the establishment of a unified Egypt around 3,100 BCE. For a while between 3,400 and 3200 BCE, the most powerful of the small states may have been Ta-Seti, actually located in the northern Nubian stretches of the Nile, just south of Egypt. The pictoral documents left by its kings reveal Ta-Seti's claim to having conquered and ruled over Upper Egypt for the time. The kingdom had strong connections both up and down the Nile. Imported items from as far north as the Syria-Palestine region turn up in the grave goods of the rulers."[54]

This provides archaeological evidence that indeed the first pharaohs of Egypt were from Nubia, as stated by Dr. Williams. Over time, the self-identification of the pharaohs may have changed, which could result in an *anticathexis* of Nubia, as later exemplified in *Wretched Kush*. Dr. Williams also noted that:

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[54] Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002) 144-145.

> The Qustul incense burner and Horus of Nekhen incense burner are royal documents and other incense burners with *serekhs* are comparable with the prehistoric palace façades from Egypt. The Qustul incense burner clearly shows the *nesu* with Horus about four generations before Iry-Hor, and a series of roughly contemporary seals and sealings from other sites refer to the dynasty by the use of the same unusual form of palace façade. One sealing actually refers to the named Ta-Seti, the name used at this period on the plaque of Hor-Aha from Abydos, the Gebel Sheikh Sulieman inscription, as well as this sealing from Nubia, that connects this particular form of palace façade with the name Ta-Seti.[55]

The predynastic *graffiti* at Gebel Tjauty and Gebel Sheikh Sulieman provide evidence of the hierarchical society structure that existed, prior to the Gerzean, and later more .elaborate depictions on murals (*e.g.* the smiting scenes) simply build upon this basic idea as artificial abundance expands in scale; thus accountancy (writing), which is attributed to King Scorpion's lifespan (c. 3300-3250 BCE) by Dr. Günter Dryer of the German Archaeological Institute, organized the growing amount of plunder and initiated the world's historic period. What is most important for our understanding of this definitive transitional period is, curiously, what was not written; this can cause one to emphasize what was written down and extrapolate from that,

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[55] Bruce Beyer Williams, *Excavations Between Abu Simbel and the Sudan Frontier: the A-Group Cemetery at Qustul: Cemetery L* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1986) 2.

without any verification about what was not written. The lack of writing allows one to interject oneself into an ancient scene, and use *modern* rationalizations as explanations.

In this way, we get the myriad of projections (and many have been proven to be erroneous) that have led to the misrepresentation of African civilization, removing Egypt from Africa in the process. Modern scholars have immersed themselves in discovering the absolute dividing line between Egyptians and Nubians, which was an assumption based on cultural orientations, but the archaeological research is telling us something different. Prehistoric Nubia was not involved in a *Zero-Sum-Game* with the 'absolute power of the pharaohs from the north': rather, they invented the paradigm and moved it northward. Could this movement be a factor in the so-called 'disappearance' of the A-Group?

Chapter 3

Nubia & Egypt *circa* 3200 BCE

By about 3200 BCE, all of the major features that we associate with pharonic Egypt were in place: hieroglyphic writing, imperialism, bureaucratic structure, armies, trade networks, irrigation, specialization, and incipient monumental architecture. Apart from full-fledged hieroglyphic writing, these features were *transplanted* from Nubia where they had coalesced between 3500-3300 BCE. Keeping in mind that our modern boundaries between 'Nubia' and 'Egypt' have an ambiguous relevance to antiquity, we are really discussing a *culture area* with fluid boundaries; *Nationalism* did not exist yet, and the distribution of power resided in the filial relations between individual power brokers, who were focused on expanding their holdings, a pattern that already existed in contemporary food-producing civilizations.

The Divorce of Egypt From Africa

The interpretation of Nubia and Egypt that we know of today is the result of 18th and 19th century assumptions, that were made by the scholars who were working in those times, sometimes using dubious methods; they also started to divorce Egypt from Africa, both paralinguistically and linguistically. Seeing pyramids in Egypt, for example would lead one to assume that they were 'Egyptian', and why not? Pyramids and other pharonic symbols are merely the result of *ideas* from the minds of ancient Africans,

along with the first known writing system. Finding the massive output of the ancient Africans in Nubia and Egypt (some scholars did see the region as a continuum, and wrote about it as such while recording their travels) had a 'sense of inevitability' *e.g.* 'if it's in Egypt, it must be of Egyptian origin'; however history is more convoluted, and it is not inevitable. Dr. Michel Foucault provided the reinterpretations of history that are certainly relevant to the discussion of the *concepts* of *Nubia* and *Egypt*, and it is possible that each became a metaphor, regarding power relations. Foucault posited that:

> "'Once knowledge can be analyzed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transportation one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power.' I believe that metaphors determined to a large extent what we can think in any field. Metaphors are not idle flourishes -- they shape what we do. They can help to make, or defend, a world view. It is important that the implications of the metaphors we employ or accept are made explicit and that the ways in which they structure our thought and even our action are better understood."[56]

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[56] Madan Sarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1993) 49-50.

Dr. Michel Foucault's Genealogical Analysis, And Historical Analysis

Historians and Egyptologists have traced lines, while Foucault proposed a *Genealogical Analysis* of the past, thus "genealogical analysis differs from traditional forms of historical analysis. Whereas traditional or 'total' history inserts events into grand explanatory systems and linear processes, celebrates great moments and individuals and seeks to document a point of origin, genealogical analysis attempts to establish and serve the singularity of events, turns away from the spectacular in favor of the discredited, the neglected and the whole range of phenomena which have been denied a history."[57] History has been projected in terms of *continuities*, and rational changes that led to one event or another, but Foucault rejected this idea: he proposed that multiple factors in a culture create contingencies rather than the absolutes that have become either ideals, or epithets. In this way, we can rethink what we *know* about ancient Nubia and Egypt, based on the recent archaeological discoveries in Nubia, which auger for a reassessment of the culture area's prehistory and history: "Genealogy is a form of critique. It rejects the pursuit of the origin in favor of the conception of historical beginnings as lowly, complex and contingent. It attempts to reveal the multiplicity of factors behind an event and the fragility of historical forms. In this view of history, which Foucault's writings exemplify, there can be no constants, no essences, no immobile forms of uninterrupted continuities structuring the past."[58] Therefore, what we know is contingent, and it is

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[57] Ibid., 59.

[58] ibid.

changing as scholars discover, rediscover, and reexamine what remains of Africa's past civilizations of the Nile Valley. The combination of the traditional approach and a post-structuralist approach is mind-expanding, and it will lead to some exciting, unexplored interpretations of the African past.

With the discoveries of King Scorpion's tomb, dated at 3250 BCE at Abydos in the 1990s by Dr. Günter Dryer, and the *Scorpion Tableau* at Gebel Tjauti by Dr. John and Deborah Darnell, an extremely significant era of African history was introduced: actually, *History* itself was introduced, because King Scorpion's tomb contained the world's first complete writing system. Dr. Bruce Williams contends that the early kings of Egypt came from Nubia, so although his tomb was in 'Egypt' we are probably looking at an expansion of territory, or conquest, that led King Scorpion to the site. Dr. Darnell has pointed out the specter of conquest, on the Scorpion Tableau, which became the model for all subsequent rulers in Egypt: but where did the *idea* come from? Based on the archaeological remains at Qustul Cemetery L, and other artifacts from Nubia, it is now clear that the practices displayed on the Scorpion Tableau did not originate in the area designated as Egypt, which challenges, or disrupts, the previous historical continuities that have become so prevalent.

Regardless of the historic methodology or epistemological approach, *time* does remain as a factor of significance in the study of Nubia and Egypt, and their context in the world as a whole: what was there, 3250 BCE worldwide, and what was not there? European scholars have been obsessed with 'firsts' in history, and the discovery of the world's first writing in Africa presents a cognitive and paradigmatic shift. Contemporary civilizations to the east predated Egypt, but they were not

writing. Indeed, it is a fact that civilization can exist without writing, but civilizations with writing have been characterized as somehow 'superior' to their non-literate contemporaries. Until the late 1990s, everyone was taught that writing began in Mesopotamia (some are still teaching it, too), and *Cuneiform* was the world's first writing system. This was a fact: but was it? Now we know that it never was a fact, although everyone accepted it, repeated it, and internalized it, even though it was totally wrong. Egyptologists, like Dr. John H. Taylor of the British Museum, note that:

> "Some of the early Lower Nubian cultures had a definite influence on the development of important stages of early Upper Egyptian culture. Comparison between the pottery of the Akban culture of the Second Cataract area and that of the Badarian, the dominant culture of Upper Egypt between *c*.5000 and *c*.4500 BC., indicates that both work closely related, an impression reinforced by the similarity in their methods of making tools and the sources they used for raw materials. The first widespread indigenous Nubian culture, the A-Group, developed between *c*.3500 and *c*.3000 BC. It extended throughout Lower Nubia and Kubanieh, north of Aswan, to the Second Cataract region and it owed a great deal both to the earlier cultures which had existed in the same area, notably the Akban culture, and those of predynastic Egypt."[59]

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[59] John H. Taylor, Egypt and Nubia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 8-9.

However, Taylor goes on to assert that the Nubians were 'simply middlemen' although the products of Nubia were so coveted in Egypt that the nation-state would not have existed, as we know it, without Nubian products. For example, gold was very scarce in Egypt like other metals, however it is extremely abundant in Nubia near Buhen, and to the east toward Wadi el-Allaqi and Wadi Gabgaba. Also, ivory from elephants was one of the most sought after commodities in ancient Egypt, which had to be procured or stolen from Nubia: "Raw materials presumably came from the south. The main Egyptian market for this trade was probably on the island of Elephantine at Aswan. The very name of the place (in Egyptian, *Abu*, 'Elephant Town', translated into 'Elephantine' by the Greeks), indicates that it was a major emporium for traffic in ivory and doubtless for other African products."[60] Here, Dr. Taylor separates "Egypt" from "Africa" as though Egypt is not in Africa. *African products*?

How did Egypt itself become *not African*? It is through such subtle distinctions that Egypt becomes separated from Africa by Egyptologists, and Nubia becomes an insignificant, subservient backwater of Egypt (which is *not African*, but they never *say* what it *is*; rather, they only tout the glorious pyramids and gold mask of King Tut, *etc.* and attribute them to "The Egyptians"). It is as though "Egypt" existed on another planet! Based on the archaeological finds, it had to be somewhere, and that just happens to be in Africa: but you would never know it, from the characterizations of the mainstream Egyptologists… In addition, Dr. Taylor asserts that "While the degree of variation in A-Group graves and their contents is insufficient to suggest the existence of a truly stratified society, the Sayala burial was not

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[60] Ibid., 9.

the only one which contained rich goods. A cemetery Qustul, near Faras, which yielded exceptionally rich goods, may be the burial place of other chiefs who profited by trade with Egypt."[61]

Notions of Civilization

Here again, the inference is that Nubia was uncivilized, and it relied on Egypt to the north for rich trade goods; however, since Nubia was the source of the rich trade goods anyway, this doesn't make sense; it ignores what was found at Qustul Cemetery L, and the dating of its artifacts with pharonic symbolism. (Also, the making of pottery and sedentary living occurred in Nubia nearly 5,000 years before it did in Egypt.) According to Dr. Taylor:

> "Because of the harsh environment of Lower Nubia the population remained small and scattered; consequently development towards an urbanized and stratified society was slow. Egypt, in contrast, experienced a rapid rise to high level of cultural development during the late fourth millennium BC. With the unification of the country under a single ruler in *c*.3100 BC, Egypt emerged as a hierarchical society with a centralised government, a written language and expanding commercial interests abroad. As territorial boundaries became more firmly defined, the First Cataract came to be regarded as a political frontier between Egypt and Nubia. With growing Egyptian prosperity and cultural

[61] ibid., 10.

> sophistication, demand for southern luxury goods increased and rulers turned more and more to aggression in order to obtain what had formerly been acquired in trade."[62]

If the pharonic symbolism, luxury goods, thousands of years of pottery-making (which is a definite sigh of sedentary, organized living) already existed in Nubia, why would Dr. Taylor hypothesize that social stratification was not present? As Dr. Leslie A. White explained in *The Science of Culture*, social stratification revolves around a culture's method of production in the following way:

- Technological System
- Social System
- Ideological System

The technological system of agriculture combines animal power and human power (called *manpower*, but women were major contributors in agricultural societies) in order to produce artificial abundance; a social system is necessary to sustain this, and it is inherently hierarchical. Based on the hierarchical system that is used for productivity, an ideological system develops that justifies, and maintains, the previous two systems: it is not the other way around, therefore the technological system exists first, a social system develops around that, and an ideological system later develops. (This pattern is sustainable for thousands of years, or until something changes the technological system, *e.g.* a shift to the use of fossil fuels, which in turn affects the social system, and the ideological system of a culture.) In reality, Dr. Taylor's

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[62] ibid., 12.

claim, that the A-Group archaeological sites were insufficient to suggest a stratified society in Nubia, runs counter to the evidence that was published in 1986 by the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute:

> "Tombs of the late A-Group reflect clear evidence of class distinctions, unlike tombs from all but the late C-Group. Five types of underground loci can be detected in this material, including three major kinds of adult human burials. The largest type of tomb consists of a trench up to ten meters long, with an oval chamber dug from the floor and side wall, usually near one end of the trench. This chamber is up to five meters long by 3 meters wide and two to two and a half meters from the floor to ceiling. These largest tombs have been found in A-group Nubia only in Cemetery L a Qustul; one was found at Hierakonpolis in Egypt. A smaller version of this type of tomb has a trench up to five or six meters long with a correspondingly smaller chamber. Several were found in Cemetery L, two in Cemetery V, and one in cemetery 142 at Sayala, one was found at Hierakonpolis in Egypt. This form of tomb had its origin in the rectangular pit and chamber grave shared by the early A-Group and Egyptian Naqada I. These tombs were probably parts of complexes like their counterparts in Egypt. Incense burners depict mat and post structures of

> the type that probably served as the cult center for these and the early Egyptian royal tomb."[63]

Evidence From Qustul

Dr. Williams found "classes" of tombs, and he designated them as Royal Tombs, Patrician tombs, Commoner burials, Cattle-sacrifice burials, and Cache pits and circular burial pits. Without question, this is what defines social stratification, and it is one the earliest example of such in Africa. Qustul is located near the Second Cataract, just across the Nile from Abu Simbel, and "Most tombs of this type were found just north of the Second Cataract, indicating, with the cemeteries at Qustul, that the major center of A-Group wealth was in this area."[64] Household items were included in the burials: why would this be? Probably, there was an idea that they would be needed in an afterlife:

> "Although the population seems to have been smaller and more disbursed than in Egypt, the varied size and elaboration of tombs indicate that social relations were more complex than might be expected in the circumstances. Tombs of ordinary people were much the same as in Egypt. Tombs of the next class in size and wealth are also approximately comparable to tombs in Egypt. However, were A-Group a simple society, a third group of tombs several times larger than either of the first two would not be expected.

[63] Bruce Beyer Williams, *The A-Group Royal Cemetery at Qustul: Cemetery L* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1984) 14.

[64] Ibid.

> These occurred, but only in Cemetery L at Qustul, a circumstance that would by itself point to a centralization of politics or cult (in pharonic terms, they are essentially identical). Their uniqueness and size are explainable by the fact that many of them are larger than somewhat earlier tombs that have been called royal in Egypt."[65]

Magnificent caches of pottery were discovered at Qustul, mainly consisting of styles that date back to Neolithic Sudan; however, even imported pottery from the Syro-Palestinian tradition in the Levant was found: this type of Early Bronze Age pottery was unknown in Egypt at the time: "Among the most interesting and important pottery vessels found in Cemetery L are jugs with shapes typical of Early Bronze Age pottery in the Levant, shapes not yet known from Egypt. The body is approximately piriform, with a wide flat base, the body approximately as wide as it is tall. The neck, some three to five centimeters high, has an inverted rim."[66] This evidence offers proof that the Nubians had extensive trade networks, and relations, with contemporary civilizations and they were not subordinate to any of them. (During future periods of Egyptian imperialism, however, Nubia was 'conquered', but Egypt had the same problem during the Intermediate Periods and beyond. Also, the ascension of the 25th Dynasty signals another drastic change in power relations, so hegemony was elusive for both Egypt and Nubia between the 'unification' of Egypt and the close of the Meroitic Period.)

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[65] ibid.

[66] ibid., 78.

Importantly a macehead, definitely a pharonic symbol, was found in Cemetery L at Qustul, predating the one found in the tomb of King Scorpion: "A pear-shaped stone macehead was found in L 24-14. This was made of greyish brown stone and mottled with irregular patches of blue and bits of white that seem clearly to be fragments of fossils. Another fragment, possibly of a macehead, was found in L 19-26, but discarded."[67] Gaming boards, gaming pieces, rectangular plaques, a calcite hippopotamus, and ivory rods were also found, the same practice seen in the later Egyptian tombs. One reason that a lot of the grave goods are fragmentary is that not only were the tombs plundered in antiquity, but the plunderers made special efforts to destroy any type of image or object that they encountered. There is evidence of burning as well, on numerous artifacts. In spite of this, the artifacts that were recovered are nothing less than fabulous, and they have rewritten world history. Dr. Williams asserts that, "Although unique in many aspects, the Qustul incense burner belongs entirely to this age, an age for which it is now possibly the most important single document. The document illustrates a ceremony in which a deity, the pharoah, and a prisoner attend a *serekh*-facade in which the prisoner is slain. Later documents show subsequent stages of the ceremony where a prisoner is actually bleeding, sometimes confronting the seated pharoah."[68]

[67] ibid., 130.

[68] ibid., 144.

Serekhs and Sacred Barks

In conjunction with this, there are scenes including *barks* (sacred boats of the pharaoh, used to navigate the Nile) that have symbolic configurations not even seen in Egypt at this time:

> "The Qustul incense burner is clearly linked to pharonic civilization by many details, including the palace facade, the white- crown, the falcon-label, the falcon-standard, the feline it labels, the sacrificial victim, and probably the rosette. The barks are the major sacred barks of pharonic Egypt that occur on a jar of Naqada III date in the British museum, on numerous early dynastic objects, in the Hierakonpolis tomb paintings, on sealings, labels, palettes, a seal from Nubia, and a jar from the Scandinavia concession as well as on numerous rock drawings from southern upper Egypt and Nubia."[69]

Virtually everyone is familiar with the white crown of Egypt, which symbolizes the ruler, or pharoah. According to Dr. Williams, "The main figure in the vessel was the pharoah, indicated by the white crown. The example here is the earliest definite occurrence of this regalia."[70] The crocodile, the dog, and the carnivore are all represented in scenes from this site, and this compact arrangement comprises something that will be repeated for centuries in Egyptian symbolism, or at least what has been attributed to *the Egyptians*. Bound prisoners and processions, presided over by the pharoah, appear to be extremely important

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[69] ibid.

[70] ibid., 142.

in Nubia and Egypt during the 4th millennium BCE, and it may have all begun south of Abu Simbel. These representations are so 'early' in design that they appear to have 'developed' and become 'more elaborate' over time: but the point remains the same. In other words, you take a 'basic idea' and as your wealth grows, you are able to devote more resources toward its reinforcement. For example, "The occurrence of the crocodile's head below the stern of the bark is very unusual. Crocodiles do not appear on the palettes, nor are they found in the animal file (except possibly the Pitt-Rivers knife handle). They are not a normal part of the repertoire of Naqada II painted pottery and they do not occur in the Hierakonpolis tomb painting as preserved and recorded."[71] There is also the sloping palanquin representation, which does not occur in Egypt until the time of King Scorpion at Abydos:

> "The leading bark in the procession is shown with a rectangular sail of the type shown on a storage jar in the British Museum. The passenger is a prisoner with his arms bound behind his back, dressed with a large flap, kneeling on a sloping palanquin; he is guarded by a man who stands behind him and restrains him by a cord in one hand while he holds a club or mace, head downward, in the other. The first palanquins for caring or supporting a bound human victim are shown on the Scorpion macehead, but with carrying poles and finials. The procession's destination is a palace facade or *serekh*, the paneled building at the right end. In this

[71] ibid., 143.

composition it is directly opposite the pharaoh's bark. Its appearance here as a shrine-building parallels occurrences on seals in Nubia, other incense burners, and an ivory knife handle in the Metropolitan Museum. Otherwise, it appears alone, often with the falcon resting on it, or as a frame for the pharaoh's name."[72]

Evidence From the Royal Cemetery of *Ta-Seti*

In conjunction with Syro-Palestinian pottery, imported Egyptian pottery was also discovered at the site: "Marks of group I A were of Egyptian origin and probably made as a kind of production control. Group I B included simple marks made for some other temporary purpose intended to be an aid to memory rather than writing."[73] However, the major epigraphic, artistic, and glyptic representations found at Qustul are local products, like the Cemetery L 23-38, OIM 24119 painted hard pink pottery bowl, "one of the most important vessels from the Nile Valley. The painting comprises a processional composition that terminated at a presentation before a shrine. Beginning there, the major elements consist of a spotted plover on a short thick line, three vultures in a diagonal row, two of which tear at serpents, with a figure of a gesturing man inside or just in front of it."[74] On another vessel at the site this symbolism may be explained as "Vultures attack enemies labeled 'Throw-stick Land' and Upper Egypt. This is the first mention of any of these entities, although

[72] ibid., 143-144.

[73] ibid., 150.

[74] Ibid., 152-153.

Ta-Tjemeh is mentioned on the Libyan Booty palette at almost the same time. This body of evidence documents a previously unrecognized phase in early painting and it shows not only developments in art but also in the historical core of pharonic civilization."[75] (Eventually, the vulture attains immeasurable significance, in pharonic Egypt's symbolism; a particular species (*Neophron percnopterus*) represented the Nekhebet (the patroness of Upper Egypt) and became known as the 'Pharoah's Chicken'.) Based on overwhelming evidence found at the Royal Cemetery of Ta-Seti, Dr. Williams was able to reach the following conclusion:

> "The major tombs in Cemetery L contained many times more wealth than did the greatest tombs yet found in A-Group Nubia. In size they compare with the plundered pairs of tombs of Dynasty 0 at Abydos (Cemetery B). They are larger than predynastic tombs at Naqada (T5) and Hierakonpolis (T100) that have been attributed to rulers. Although the tombs had been heavily pillaged, the surviving wealth in pottery - over a thousand Exterior Painted (Form Group I) vessels, large numbers of Egyptian vessels in many varieties and often of large sizes, and 'Asiatic' jugs of types not yet known in Egypt - was equal or superior to that of the tombs in Cemetery B at Abydos and far greater than any earlier tombs. Were the tombs found in Egypt, Cemetery L would have been attributed to rulers, without qualification, from the evidence of

[75] Ibid., 156.

> wealth alone. Wealth is, however only a part of the evidence. The persons buried in the great tombs of Cemetery L at Qustul were pharaohs. Since the victory over Upper Egypt is recorded, that country was presumably not their homeland. Both objects and practices indicate that these pharaohs belonged to Nubia; a number of early objects and monuments refer to this region in some way as Ta-Seti."[76]

It may be exceedingly difficult for Egyptologists to unlearn what they have been taught, and taken for granted, since they commenced their studies of ancient Egypt; this is understandable. But the beauty of science is that when the prevailing theory is no longer compatible with the empirical evidence, it must be reexamined or possibly abandoned within the disciplinary matrix. (Truth is inconvenient, especially when it causes you to have to redo work that took you decades to achieve!) Alternative findings create anxiety, because they suggest to us that we never actually 'knew' what *we thought that we knew*... In the case of Nubia and Egypt, conclusions were reached based on the evidence that was available: how startling was it when Dr. Günter Dryer discovered the world's first writing in Egypt, when we had all been taught that it began in Mesopotamia, with Cuneiform? We are now at the precipice of another scientific revolution, whose implications are as profound for Egyptology as some of the 'accidental discoveries' chronicled by Thomas Kuhn, in his groundbreaking *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn points out that the 'straight path' of scientific experimentation (*e.g.* following the textbook without

[76] ibid., 163.

deviation) is not what led to the discovery of Oxygen by Lavoisier, or the X-Ray by Roentgen. Rather, Kuhn explains in *Anomaly and the Emergence of Scientific Discoveries* that:

> "Normal science, the puzzle-solving activity we have just examined, is a highly cumulative enterprise, eminently successful in its aim, the steady extension of the scope and precision of scientific knowledge. In all these respects it fits with great precision the most usual image of scientific work. Yet one standard product of the scientific enterprise is missing. Normal science does not aim at novelties of fact or theory and, when successful, finds none. New and unsuspected phenomena are, however, repeatedly uncovered by scientific research, and radical new theories have again and again been invented by scientists. History even suggest that the scientific enterprise has developed a uniquely powerful technique for producing surprises of this sort. If this characteristic of science is to be reconciled with what has already been said, then research under a paradigm must be particularly effective way of inducing paradigm change. That is what fundamental novelties of fact and theory do."[77]

Dr. John H. Taylor contends that "The A-Group chiefs who had profited by acting as intermediaries in the trade now found themselves bypassed as the Egyptians sought to make

[77] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 52.

contact directly with the markets further south."[78] In his view, the A-Group merely had "chiefs" and they were mere "intermediaries" although the archeological evidence proves otherwise: Egypt's trade networks were at an incipient stage, in comparison to the A-Group's. This type of misrepresentation and denial is prevalent, and it has fueled communized assumptions that are not supported by archaeological evidence. For example, Dr. Taylor further asserts that:

> "The A-Group culture, which had reached its peak in the Egyptian First Dynasty (c.3100-2890 BC), came to an end in the early third millennium, and the following centuries are almost a blank in the archaeological record of northern Nubia. Thinly scattered groups of indigenous people perhaps continued to occupy the region as late as the Fourth or Fifth Dynasty but the majority of inhabitants of Lower Nubia seem to have abandoned the Nile valley and retreated to the desert edges, forced to leave their homes by a deterioration in the climate and the effects of the change in Egyptian policy from a mutually beneficial exchange system to one of exploitation."[79]

So, if the archaeological record is "blank" then how could Dr. Taylor know where the A-Group went? What evidence is there for a migration pattern of the A-Group? If there is none, as Dr. Taylor contends, his claims are mere speculation, based on

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[78] John H. Taylor, Egypt and Nubia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 12-13.

[79] Ibid., 13.

the 'dominant Egypt' paradigm, which has been disproven by the fact that the Nubian pharaohs existed first, and it was their royal symbolism that was somehow adopted by Egypt. Granted, there is a shift in the power relations in this area during the Gerzean, however the mechanism by which it occurred is not at all clear: the earliest Egyptian pharaohs were probably from Nubia.

In my opinion, power was most likely based around *an individual*, and it was very fragile as a result of the numerous human frailties that exist: there are a number of examples, throughout history, of a civilization's collapse when it was based around an individual, including Alexander the Great, Lord Pacal, or even Odoacer. (Even in the 21st century, how long did it take for the Arab Spring movement to topple the leaders of Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya?) A charismatic Nubian king could easily have taken his court north, expanding his territory and establishing pharonic practice in what we know as Egypt today: the modern boundaries did not exist as they now stand, so rigid separations of what is 'Egypt', and what is 'Nubia', undermine people's ability to come to terms with the A-Group. Once Lower Nubia became inhabited again by the C-Group by 2345 BCE, Dr. Taylor claims that:

> "The C-Group culture remained dominant in the north until the people were encouraged to adopt Egyptian customs in the sixteenth century BC. Though stemming from the same cultural tradition as the A-Group the C-Group did not develop directly from the earlier phase: the precise origins of the people who reoccupied northern Nubia at this time are uncertain, but it is

probable that they had moved in from the Western Desert."[80]

This is vague. How can the C-Group stem "from the same cultural tradition as the A-Group" and at the same time "not develop directly from the earlier phase" that Dr. Taylor contends is "a blank" in the archaeological record? Such claims are part and parcel of the *divisive innuendos* that contain an anticathexis of all that is African, *beaming the Egyptians up, Scotty* to an exclusive, nebulous, extraterrestrial realm (although Egypt is in Africa). As Dr. Taylor concludes, "The pottery of the C-Group is highly distinctive and, though handmade, shows high technical excellence. Some of it has clear affinities with Egyptian types, such as the black-topped red ware, also associated with the A-Group and the Kerma and Pan-Grave Cultures. The manufacture and decoration of other types, however, display African influence more strongly."[81] What does Dr. Taylor *mean*? Aren't Egypt, Nubia, Kerma, the A-Group, the C-Group, and the Pan-Grave Cultures all in Africa? Unless I am geographically challenged, this type of characterization is a serious problem. While Dr. Taylor lauds the "technical excellence" of some of the C-Group's pottery, he seems to be unimpressed with the pottery that displays "African influence more strongly." Perhaps, if it displayed *African* influence *less strongly*, then it would be okay… But, what is wrong with being *African*, is the question. The miraculous attempts, and they have been wildly successful, at taking Egypt out of Africa accounts for the characterizations of this sort: truly, most people do not associate *King Tut* with Africa, and I think that this is a serious academic, historical,

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[80] ibid., 13.

[81] ibid., 13-14.

cultural, political, and economic problem. In his discussion of the Sixth Dynasty's trade expeditions, for example, Taylor separates Egypt from Africa noting that:

> "Egyptian records of the Sixth Dynasty show that the main goal of the expeditions at this time was a region known as the land of Yam, which lay to the south of Wawat, Irtjet, and Satju. Harkhuf made four journeys there, using donkey caravans to avoid the laborious portages which would have been necessary to get boats past the Second Cataract. The account of the products he brought back, which included ebony, incense, oil, leopard-skins, elephant-tusks and throwsticks, show that he was making contact with African luxury goods."[82]

So, apparently Harkhuf was 'not African', although he was from Egypt, and he had to make "contact" with African luxury goods, and from where? Isn't Egypt in Africa? Egypt appears to be the only place in the world that is somehow cognitively separate from its continent! Why is this? The presumption that, based on the pyramids, hieroglyphic writing, the Valley of the Kings, the Bust of Nefertiti, etc., the Egyptians couldn't possibly be 'just Africans' explains why. In this way, Africans are robbed en masse of their civilization-building preeminence in antiquity, and characterized as having none at all, other than a few ephemeral chiefdoms...

In reality, the opposite is the case, since African civilizations had come and gone by the time the Mediterraneans

[82] Ibid., 16.

(Romans) established civilization in Western Europe (*e.g.* sites in Britannia and Gaul in the 1st century BCE). The Mediterraneans were in contact with Africa and the Near East, and they developed Aegean civilization on Crete by about 2,200 BCE that spread to the mainland over the next millennium: but it was not to be, for Western Europe. Now, Western Europeans have 'rewritten the history of World Civilization', and it does not include Africans. Rather, Western Europeans have reinvented themselves as "the arbiters of Civilization" thereby deciding who is civilized, and who is not, although they were just about the last population in the world to attain it, in any real sense, as a result of the Roman invasion, the Arab invasion of Iberia, and the Crusades. Africa remains an open wound for the Europeans who developed the Atlantic Slave Trade in the 15th century, and the absolute denigration (*i.e.* unquestionable inferiority by comparison) of all that is *African* during this crime against humanity: in order to protect *Ego*, *Identification* with this is repressed, and the mention of the term *Africa* creates anxiety. The idea of *Africans* as the founders of 'Egyptian' civilization, and the first people in the world to develop a writing system, creates cognitive dissonance in the Eurocentric conscious, because so much psychic energy has been directed at reducing Africans to *Savagery*, which was in turn used as an excuse for their unrepentant exploitation.

People generally believe that when they 'name' something, they understand it: a definition; this is initially *perceptive*, but eventually it becomes *cognitive*. Once a person's cognitive map is developed, by linguistic or paralinguistic reinforcement (forms of teaching, or *Education*), this mental map can become unflappable, for good or ill. As a result, terms become *freighted*, and the hubris of presumed cultural superiority emerges. The

Western European relationship with Africa is responsible for their difficulty to think of Africans in *human* terms, due to their massive, sustained effort to categorize and dehumanize Africans. In Dr. Peter Gay's *The Cultivation of Hatred: The Bourgeois Experience Victoria to Freud*, Dr. Gay, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University, the recipient of Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships, an Overseas Fellowship of Churchill College, Cambridge, and the Heineken Prize for Historical Study, explained that:

> "In the 1880s, it was accepted wisdom that the higher races were destined to expand and to rule over their inferiors in continents not yet fully open to the West. Even the new great powers, the United States among them, took to this sincerely felt propaganda with a will. As Americans awoke to the recognition that they could compete with other serious players in world politics, they devised intoxicating slogans like 'Manifest Destiny' to justify their expansionism. Imperialism was nothing less than a sacred duty imposed on the higher races. This, of course, was the lesson of Kipling's overworked verses 'the White Man's Burden,' which thousands found memorable, verses that urge the white man to take up his heavy destiny and send the best of his race into 'exile' to serve their 'captives' need. That need was, it seems, imperative: 'in heavy harness', the white man must wait on his new-caught, sullen peoples, 'Half-devil and half-child.' The last line is scarcely a flattering portrait of the lucky beings the white man was

> obliged to raise to a higher level of civilization."[83]

The 1800s was the time when Egyptology was in its infancy. Research occurred in the political climate described by Dr. Gay; both the *Victorian* and *Freudian* cognitive maps (which are probably inseparable) undergird the perceptions and analyses of Nubia and Egypt. The portrayal of Egypt as *not African*, relieves the European of the anxiety that accompanies the cognitive burden, presented by any association with "Half-devil and half child" Africans; thus, ancient Egypt and 'the Egyptians' became 'something else' (in their minds), and they can be obsessively praised beyond any civilization or culture in the world (even their own, which is *comparatively* recent and rudimentary). However, if the Egyptians turned out to be 'just Africans', then what would the resulting interpretation be?

According to widely available archaeological evidence, "A-Group cemeteries have been found as far north as Kubaniyya and as far south as Melik en-Nasir in the Second Cataract; the known area occupied was thus slightly more extensive than that occupied by the C-Group of Lower Nubia later."[84] This fact is extremely significant, because Kubaniyya (or Kubanieh) is located north of the First Cataract, north of Elephantine, and north of Aswan, areas that are unquestionably identified as "Egypt" by mainstream Egyptologists:

> "As territorial boundaries became more firmly defined, the First Cataract came to be regarded as

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[83] Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred: The Bourgeois Experience Victoria to Freud* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1993) 85.

[84] Bruce Beyer Williams, *The A-Group Royal Cemetery at Qustul: Cemetery L* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1986) 9.

> a political frontier between Egypt and Nubia. With growing Egyptian prosperity and cultural sophistication, demand for southern luxury goods increased and rulers turned more and more to aggression in order to obtain what had formerly been acquired through trade. Raids into Nubia took place in the First Dynasty and seem to have increased in frequency and scale during the Old Kingdom (*c.*2686-2181 BC)."[85]

Since the Nubian A-Group cemeteries were located in the area *known* as Upper Egypt before the emergence of pharonic Egypt, it explains why we see all of the pharonic symbolism first in what became *known* as Nubian A-Group burials (named as such, by Dr. George Reisner), and the continuation of these practices in Upper Egypt leading to the subsequent dynastic chronology. The differentiation that Dr. Reisner made, in the early 1900s, has hardened into the A-Group characterization, and a rigid cognitive separation between Nubia and Egypt, as archaeologists attempt to study this culture area. Another reason for the confusion that exists about what constitutes Nubia or Egypt is the result of time: over the past 10,000 years, the names of sites have changed, as they have been occupied and abandoned. Depending on who you ask, you may get different names, for the same site.

> "The area immediately to the south of the Ancient Egyptian frontier at Aswan was known, certainly by the time of the Old Kingdom, as the land of Wawat. Wawat was a land of great

[85] John H. Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 12.

wealth on account of the prolific gold mines that lay within its territory. Further to the south was the land of Kush which is most frequently referred to in Egyptian inscriptions with the epithet 'miserable' or 'wretched', even after the territory had been incorporated within the Egyptian Empire. Kush is used in a geographical sense, its inhabitants being referred to as the Nehesy, the people who inhabited the river valley, as opposed to the Medjay who occupied the wadis in Eastern Desert. The origin of the term Kush is unknown, but it does not appear to be an Egyptian word. The earliest form of the word can be transliterated as 'Kas' and thereafter it appears most frequently as 'Kash'. Today the most common designation of that area occupied by the Kingdom of Kush is Nubia. The name Nubia derives from a people known as the Noba or Nuba who moved into the Nile Valley, apparently from the south-west, over a period of centuries and ultimately filled the power vacuum created by the collapse of the Kushite state."[86]

Western Interpretations of African Sites

An Egyptian inscription from the Second Intermediate Period at Buhen (the fortified city that was used for centuries to exploit the massive Nubian gold reserves) strongly suggests an amicable relationship between a ruler of Kush, who must have

[86] Derek A. Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires* (Princeton: Markus Weiner Publishers, 1998) 7-8.

had substantial power at the time, and been thoroughly imbued with the practices of the Horus tradition that dated back to the A-Group, commanded recognition from the Egyptians: "That it was a term acceptable to the indigenous rulers of the area during the Second Intermediate Period is clear from the inscription found at Buhen recording the construction of a temple of Horus 'to the satisfaction of the ruler of Kush'."[87] All of this became confused when the Greeks were allowed into Egypt, probably around the 6^{th} century BCE, and they described Nubians as "Ethiopians" meaning 'burnt-faced persons' in their language. Later, the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty of Egypt was identified as the "Ethiopian Dynasty" by modern Egyptologists, and this has prevailed for the past 200 years or so. "To the classical authors of the Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman world, the kingdom and the geographical area was called Ethiopia, and the people were called Ethiopians -- meaning 'burn-faced persons'. The use of this term in a modern context, however, is rather confusing as the Kushites and the peoples occupying the *Ethiopian highlands* had very little in common."[88] This wrongheaded, gross misrepresentation of Nubia has served as "scholarship" for years, and it permeates the literature on Nubia and Egypt, repeated over and over, in textbook after textbook. But, this is due to the underlying assumption that was based on "Race" which made "Black Africans" *savage and primitive*, and "The Egyptians" an *advanced* civilization from, *who knows where*? In the view of mainstream Egyptologists, the Kingdom of Kush has been portrayed as a mere ephemeral vassal of Egypt, *maybe*

[87] Ibid., 7.

[88] ibid.

having one or two 'glorious' stages, then collapsing into oblivion and obscurity…

> "Consideration of the Kushites alongside such giants of the ancient world as the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians is justified on account of the longevity of the kingdom and of its size, if for no other reasons. At the time when Rome was a small village on the banks of the Tiber and the Greek city states held sway over minuscule territories, the Kushites ruled an empire stretching from the central Sudan to the borders of Palestine. The Kingdom of Kush outlived the Greek city states and the period of Macedonian hegemony over vast tracts of the ancient world, and co-existed with the rise, heyday and much of the period of decline of the Roman Empire. With the expulsion of the Kushites from Egypt at the hands of the Assyrians, the Kushite kingdom became peripheral to the Mediterranean world and increasingly found itself in the end of a cul-de-sac in the Nile valley, the exit to which was always blocked by a strong power to the north. Thus, little interest was taken in Kush by its literate northern neighbors."[89]

We greatly value contemporary written accounts from the ancient world, and scholars believe in them to the point of absolutism: if they wrote it, then it's probably true, so to speak. However, is this actually the case? According to ancient scribes,

[89] Ibid., 8-9.

the group doing the writing is always great, always the winner, always in the right, no matter what. This practice is common for all literate cultures, even ours; there are things that inscriptions will never tell you, so you cannot get a balanced and realistic account from them, although they can tell you 'something' (which is interpretive). We have the pictorial or *rebus* pharonic symbolism of the Nubians (which predates writing) that tells us something about the foundations of ancient African praxis, which led to the increasingly elaborate *Great Tradition* practices of the 3rd millennium BCE. As the initiation of pharonic praxis may have been centered on an individual, or a small number of individuals in the 4th millennium BCE, the power of that office was enhanced and duplicated by successive generations: who was the first to start it? Whoever it was changed the region forever, and in the same way, one person (not a whole population) may be responsible for the major architectural and engineering developments that led to the subsequent dynastic traditions: Imhotep. These traditions had already been established for nearly a thousand years, by the time of Imhotep, and he was able to build upon them, in his own ingenious way: no one has figured him out yet. The Egyptian pyramid has become the quintessential *essence* of Egypt, in most people's perception or imagination, at least symbolically. As a result, people may tend to start their analysis of Egypt during the *time* that the pyramids were built, at the expense of everything else, without questioning how and why they got there.

Importantly, *pyramids* were built in various culture areas around the world, and they served different purposes; but each of them addressed a 'problem' that the culture needed to solve, whether functional, symbolic, or both. Monumental architecture became a part of these civilizations, and modern value judgments

of their merits are probably misguided, as we project our values onto the ancient structures. For example, regardless of how tall, beautifully carved, or painted a statue may have been in ancient Egypt, if it did not have a name on it, well, it didn't really mean much to them: but once you affix a name to it, well, that's a different story, regardless of the likeness. (We'd revere *The Balzac* if we didn't even know who the artist was, or who the subject of the work was, or its importance in art history.) With this in mind, we can take a fresh look at things that we've made up our minds about already.

As we have even seen in our own times, *one* person can transform everything that came before into a new synthesis, causing us to wonder why we weren't doing it 'that way' before! Yes, a single human can change the whole world. However, once the change is implemented in a culture, it seems that you can never go back... Hence, pharonic Egypt, influenced by Nubian ideologies and practices, coalesces during the Gerzean, but *how* it happened is somehow forgotten. The ancient Egyptians undertook archaeological projects around 2,200 BCE in an attempt to reconstruct this past, but they were unable to do so even then; it mattered, in their time. Of course, it is still extremely important to us, as we attempt to reconstruct the past, marveling at the engineering accomplishments that took place 6,000 years ago, or more. In this way, we are continuing to engage that valiant effort from antiquity, in our modern world.

Nubia and Egypt had a common origin, with the Nubians establishing the pharonic ideologies, and practices, which spread as far north to the delta region during the third millennium BCE; numerous late 19^{th} and early 20^{th} century Egyptologists have established careers upon the glorification of

Egypt, and the trivialization of Nubia, and they failed to represent this culture area objectively. What Midant-Reynes, Trigger, Williams, Emberling, Gatto, Ehret, Tyson, Welsby, and other modern archaeologist working in Nubia have found, presents an empirical challenge to the massive, and often irrational, preexisting body of literature's portrayal of Nubia and Egypt in antiquity.

Chapter 4

Deconstructing the Idea of *Wretched Kush*: Nubia & Egypt After *c.*3200 BCE

The practice of dividing cultural developments into 'periods' or 'phases' is a common (and seemingly unavoidable) practice; however, it is paradoxical and possibly responsible for some of the misleading conclusions that it creates. As Dr. Derek A. Welsby pointed out in *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires:*

> "It has been common for much of this century for archaeologists to divide the history of Kush into two phases, the Napatan and the Meroitic. Reisner, who first coined these terms wrote... 'the Meroitic Kingdom of Ethiopia is culturally and politically merely a continuation of the Napatan Kingdom of Ethiopia'. Later scholars have made much of the distinction between the two periods based on a number of factors. The date assigned to this 'cultural change' has been related to the location of the royal burial grounds, whether at Napata or Meroe. Reisner noted in the light of his statement quoted above that 'it was therefore to be expected that the first king's tomb at Meroe would approximate in its structure, reliefs, inscriptions, burial chambers, and

> funerary furniture [to] the last preceding king's tomb at Napata...' The history of Kush is a continuum and it is not desirable arbitrarily to divide it into periods. In this book the terms Napatan and Meroitic are avoided wherever possible, except for the designation Meroitic for the indigenous language of Kush."[90]

Historical Schemes

Not only is the "history of Kush" a continuum, but the history of the entire Nile Valley region is a continuum; it has been butchered by a succession of scholars, and we must now disaggregate the so-called 'periods'. Were they actually periods in the first place? As Dr. Michel Foucault has argued, histories are not inevitable, rationally proceeding affairs. And, as Charles Darwin stated in his *Recapitulations and Conclusions* in 1881, "the earth's crust is not a well-filled museum."

People are *confused* about the present, however, for some reason they presume that they can conclusively 'figure the past out'. Was it a simpler time? Is it *possible* that it could have been a *more complex* time to live? Such ideas are subject to ridicule, in the face of *Ethnocentric Modernism*. All of the pathologies that we have today existed in ancient Nile Valley civilization, down to fratricide, revolution, greed, hoarding, despotism, finding a husband or wife at the family reunion, belief systems, love (whatever that *means* to people, but I am sure that everyone is convinced that they know what it is, and they can easily define

[90] ibid., 8.

it), and the entire range of human expression. (Actually, we had to learn it from the ancients, because we didn't exist yet.)

Therefore, we must rethink what we already believe, in order to clarify what we perceive to be Nubia and Egypt, as separate entities, locales, or populations. We are faced with ambiguity, at every turn, thus we must now embrace some 'ideological degrees of freedom' in our assessments, instead of accepting the absolutes that have been projected upon us by Reisner, and his cohort. They did the best that they could, in their time, and were unable to complete their work, as Dr. Dows Dunham stated in his November 1979 preface of *Excavations at Kerma Part VI.*:

> "In March, 1975 the writer began the study of what can now, after some sixty years, be made available of the unpublished work of the late Dr. George A. Reisner at the site of Kerma. His excavation of this extensive cemetery covered the three seasons 1913-14, 1914-15, and a short third season 1915-16, but a considerable volume of what he considered to be of secondary importance had to be eliminated because of the demands of his other pioneering work in the Sudan as well as to limits of staff and financial resources. After Reisner's death in 1942 and the transfer of the Expedition records from Harvard Camp at the Pyramids to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 1946, other obligations prevented me from attempting to make the unpublished record available. A former assistant of mine, Miss Elisabeth Eaton, undertook after

her marriage to Mr. Steven Weld to study the material for us, but her failing health and premature death some years ago prevented her from completing the assignment."[91]

Dr. George A. Reisner's Assumptions About Nubia

The effort that was put into the project by Dr. George Reisner, who is considered to be the 'Father of Nubian Archaeology', is staggering, especially considering that he was at work in Africa during World War I, a conflict that was on an unimaginable scale by today's standards (*e.g.* when the United States eventually entered the war, we sent between one and two million men to Europe during the war, including my grandfather.) Conditions were not ideal for Dr. Reisner, and they seldom are for archaeologists when they are conducting fieldwork. Regardless, archaeologists have been able to overcome seemingly insurmountable circumstances, and uncover past civilizations, which requires unquestionable courage and determination.

Part of the confusion regarding Nubia and Egypt can be traced to the conclusions that Dr. Reisner reached, when he excavated Kerma sites that are located south of the Third Cataract: he assumed that Egyptians had 'gone native', presumably after being administrators of Nubia for so long, and that was why so much "Egyptian" material was found. Although in Kerma, he categorized and named the cemetery Egyptian.

[91] Dows Dunham, *Excavations at Kerma Part VI.* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982) iii.

According to Dr. Reisner's *Excavations at Kerma* (Vols. V and VI of the Harvard African Studies, 1923):

> "The chief division of the fields is the southern part, called by me the Egyptian Cemetery, because there the greatest number of objects of Egyptian manufacture were found and all the persons identified by name were Egyptians. It is the archaeological group formed by the southern tumuli to which the present volume is chiefly devoted. The most characteristic elements of this southern archaeological group were also found in a series of smaller graves scattered over the field to the north of the great tumuli of the Egyptian Cemetery, and these are therefore included in that cemetery. But towards the northeast, directly behind K XIII-XVI [i.e., graves adjacent to K LVI and Cemetery B], this cemetery of Egyptian graves merges into another cemetery in which some graves, presenting a few elements of the Egyptian groups, contained on the whole pottery of new forms and new wares which I call Nubian, while others contained only the Nubian pottery."[92]

By the time that Dr. Reisner did his excavations, it had already been 'established' that Egypt was unquestionably the dominant super-power of Nile Valley civilization, and that Nubia was just a peripheral tribal region from which Egypt recruited archers. Dr. Reisner's 'naming scheme' created a categorical

[92] Ibid., vii.

deixis for this culture area that contained embedded, misleading contradictions. Egyptian *bas reliefs* displaying bound Nubian captives reinforced the assumptions of difference between Nubia and Egypt, *prima facie*; of course, they *were* painted by the Egyptians who were always the winners, in their own estimation, and knowledge of the pharonic symbolism from Qustul emerged decades later. Dr. Durham has drawn Dr. Reisner's analysis of Kerma into question, noting a number of assumptions that are now untenable:

> "As far back as the Old Kingdom in Egypt there are many records indicating contact with the south which was a source of many things coveted by Egypt, such as gold, cattle, slaves, ivory, ebony and much else. In the Middle Kingdom a chain of fortified posts protected the trade between Egypt and Nubia, and made Kerma the major entrepôt for this contact. When Reisner excavated the site, he found too large mud-brick structures called the Upper and Lower Deffufas, one apparently a fort, the other an administrative and trading center. Because of the finding of a number of very large burial mounds, in one of which (K III) he found two Egyptian black granite statues inscribed with the names of Hepjefa and his wife Sennuwy, both known persons in Assiut Middle Egypt, he quite naturally assumed that Hepjefa was the Egyptian Governor, who, with his wife, had died at Kerma and been buried there in totally un-Egyptian fashion, accompanied by hundreds of human sacrifices. This conclusion of Reisner's has long

> been questioned, for no Egyptian of rank would have been buried in barbaric fashion in a foreign land. The explanation of Reisner's that Hepjefa had so long been Governor of Kerma that he had gone native and adopted Nubian burial customs, seems now very improbable and has been generally discounted. My more recent study of the record published by Reisner, and of the further graves at Kerma now being presented for the first time, has convinced me that Reisner's view of Kerma as governed and controlled by Egypt in the Middle Kingdom was in error."[93]

Importantly, since Dr. Reisner was the *Father of Nubian Archaeology*, to contradict his conclusions would have dealt a fatal blow to one's career, in Reisner's time; also, why would anyone contradict him anyway, since he had the concession, and he was a senior scholar from Harvard University, one of the world's most prestigious institutions? The idea that there were mutually beneficial trade relations, and comparable power relations, between Nubia and Egypt differs from the prevailing notions regarding this culture area. Egypt never fully enjoyed the hegemony that people presume, evidenced by the numerous intermediate periods (the *First Intermediate Period* was *c.*2130 – 1939 BCE, when pharonic Egypt collapsed, followed by a *Second Intermediate Period c.*1630 – 1540 BCE, and the *Third Intermediate Period c.*1070 – 712 BCE; however, even during the reigns of the pharaohs, there were many *Nomes* all over Egypt and Nubia who never submitted to pharonic rule).

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[93] ibid., 9.

By no means was Egypt the perpetual powerbroker of Nile Valley civilization, for it would not have sustained so many collapses, during the 3rd, 2nd, and 1st millennia BCE, if that were the case. As with all of the ancient civilizations, they enjoyed periods of apparent dominance, but none of them were able to achieve a truly sustainable hegemony: why was this? The larger their empires grew, the more difficult it became for them to manage it; rivals and usurpers within and without these civilizations presented constant threats. In this way, rulers had a *Power Fantasy*, that is, they appeared to be worshiped by their subjects, believed that they were powerful, believed that anything that they desired was theirs for the taking: but they were wrong, as the collapse of their empires was to prove:

> "The prominence and consistency with which the theology of divine kingship was proclaimed inhibits an understanding of the office of king as a political one, and hence the writing of history, of which we know remarkably little for the Old and Middle Kingdoms. The source material is so slight that narrative history may be considered an inappropriate literary form, particularly if one begins to suspect that the impressive façade of uniformity and continuity presented by inscriptions and monuments designed to propound the theology of divine kingship hides a complex and changing political scene. The realities of earthly power -- the usurpations and complex family relationships, of which one well-studied example is known from the Fourth Dynasty -- imply that kingship must have been

perceived on more than one level, and that some form of rationalization was necessary."[94]

The pessimistic *Admonitions of Ipuwer* were written during the First Intermediate Period, and this rare text expresses anxieties about kingship and its efficacy. "The lamentations are apparently being addressed by Ipuwer to a king who is held responsible for what is described: 'Authority, knowledge, and truth are yours, yet confusion is what you set throughout the land.'"[95] The consequences of royal indulgences, in conjunction with political and/or administrative incompetence, have proven to be catastrophic for civilizations, both ancient and modern. As a result of filial piety, and legitimate royal succession, dynasties present the appearance of continuity and stability; however, this ideal form of propagation eventually broke down, when confronted by overpowering internal or external forces.

The Effect of the Nile on Nubia and Egypt

The main source of Egypt's wealth was its grain, and therefore the civilization was totally dependent on the flooding of the Nile. During the First Intermediate Period, the Nile did not flood as high as it normally would, and widespread famine was experienced. At the same time Nubia had the opposite situation, with the Nile flooding higher than it normally would: "From the period following the end of the Old Kingdom comes a remarkably large number of the ancient references to famine in Upper Egypt, some explicitly linked with low Nile levels. By

[94] B.G. Trigger, B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor and A.B. Lloyd, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 73.

[95] Ibid., 75.

contrast, a series of Nile flood level records from Nubia covering the late Twelfth an early Thirteen Dynasties document and intermittent series of high flood levels."[96] The low Niles were not a one-time event, rather, they occurred frequently; but they did not have the same effect on Nubia that they did to the north. The monuments and increasingly elaborate artifacts that are visible in Egypt probably blinded early researchers, leading to their assumptions of Egyptian hegemony; it was a simplistic assumption, though. Monumental architecture was designed exactly for that purpose: to overwhelm the spectator, and make them assume that they were in the presence of a 'greater power', with the intent of making them more hesitant to challenge:

> "It can scarcely go unnoticed that the decline of court culture after the Sixth and Twelfth dynasties occurred close in time to freak Nile levels: the famine-creating lows of the early First Intermediate Period and the highs of the Semna levels. Although neither seems to have interfered appreciably with the development of riverine culture in Nubia, an area which one might have supposed to be even more exposed to ecological change than Egypt, they can scarcely be ignored in attempting to understand the historical processes at work at these times. It involves far too simplistic the view of society to see governmental decline as a direct and inevitable consequence of ecological adversity. Its most likely contribution would have been to impose a further strain on the balance between competing

[96] ibid., 180.

> demands for surplus, particularly if it also came at a time of diminishing returns from a period of increasingly intense agricultural exploitation. But the way in which this aggravated situation was resolved would depend very much on the relative strengths of the competing groups. The way in which a period of governmental weakness seems to have followed these two periods of eccentric Nile behavior may itself be evidence for the existence of groups of people before whose power kings had to give way."[97]

This has been ignored, in the analysis of the relationship between Nubia and Egypt; the frequent collapses of Dynastic Egypt and the frequent rises of Nubia were not merely due to low Niles. Power relations were dynamic, and fluid, because neither civilization could maintain absolute power over the other, once they had become somewhat differentiated. For example, Egyptian power over Nubia appears to have disappeared after the Fifth Dynasty, and there are numerous periods of this sort in the archaeological record:

> "Whether the appearance of C-group culture was a cause or the result of the apparent abandonment of the Egyptian settlement in Nubia after the Fifth Dynasty cannot be determined. At this time the governors of Elephantine bear the title 'overseer of foreign lands', in one case 'overseer of the foreign lands of his lord': Yam, Irtjet and Wawat, and this,

[97] ibid., 181-182.

> together with the strong mercenary soldier element mentioned above, might suggest some political agreement to Egypt's advantage with these Nubian groups."[98]

Identity and the Ancient Boundaries of Nubia and Egypt

C-group culture continued to prosper in the face of the presumed ubiquitous Egyptian presence, well into the time of Ahmose and Kamose, as the Hyksos finally lost power in the region, and "C-Group culture has been found at numerous sites in Lower Nubia, with particular concentrations in the fertile areas around Faras, Aniba and Dakka, and with one outlier in Egypt itself, at Kubaniyya, 13km north of Aswan."[99] So, if Nubia and Egypt were so separate, what is a C-group settlement doing in Egypt during times that Egypt was presumed to have hegemony? The fact is that, it's complicated; however scholars have 'filled in the blanks' as they pleased for the past two centuries. True, it is difficult to reconstruct human interactions from antiquity, and *convenient theories* have abounded, when it comes to Nubia.

Dr. Stuart Tyson Smith called into question the numerous oversimplifications of the interaction between Nubia and Egypt, in 2003, when he published *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire*. Dr. Tyson's rigorous study critically analyzes modern perceptions, and how they affect people's understanding of Nubia:

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[98] ibid., 126.

[99] ibid., 127.

> "Modern boundaries seem firm and immutable. National borders are delineated through diplomatically recognized maps and on the ground through border posts, customs offices and physical barriers. Travel across them is regulated by treaty and enforced by bureaucrats, military, and police. Although sometimes disputed, arguments over boundaries concern where to draw the line, not whether the line should exist at all. Even though different polities are unified, as with the European Union or the former Yugoslavia, internal boundaries have proven surprisingly resilient. In a similar way, ethnic groups are seen as bounded, distinctive entities. Ethnic identity is based upon a real or perceived (self-defined) shared culture, history, and language. Ethnicity can also be ascribed by others, a phenomenon that is particularly common in colonial contexts like the one discussed here."[100]

What is 'known' about Nubians in antiquity comes mainly from Egyptian sources and the archaeological record, therefore the Nubians did not offer a dissenting voice when they were being portrayed as "wretches" or "cowards" in gratuitous hieroglyphic inscriptions. The Egyptians celebrated themselves, and their military conquests, with numerous monuments and denigrated the Nubians in the process. Although they constantly referred to "Kush" as wretched, it is perplexing that they would

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[100] Stuart Tyson Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 1.

continue to attempt to be there if this was the case: this fact alone smacks of misrepresentation... Dr. Smith asserts that "The negative qualities of Nubian ethnicity helped to define the positive qualities of Egyptian-ness. Both of these perspectives, internal and external, represent ethnic groups as distinctive traditions, bounded in space and time. In a similar way, the archaeological search for national and ethnic boundaries has typically assumed that distinct transitions between groups and polities will be manifested in the archaeological record."[101] Based on the Bible, archaeologists assumed that the earliest civilizations would be in the Holy Land: they were wrong. Errors such as these occur before anyone even goes into the field, and they pervade the fieldwork thereafter. In this way, archaeologists go into the field 'already knowing' what they are looking for. In turn, they often find what they are looking for, whether it is there or not. However in ancient Africa "Boundaries are and were more permeable than the pronouncements of governments assert. There is also an emerging consensus that ethnic identities are not absolute and bounded, but rather situational and overlapping."[102] The well- accepted acculturation model, causing other cultures to simply convert to Egyptian ways, is definitely inaccurate here, because pharonic tradition began in Nubia, not Egypt. It is also not a unidirectional process as history has proven, because the invaders often adopt the culture of the invaded. "Indeed, several scholars have pointed out that even in contexts of dramatic power differential, such as slavery, cultural borrowings are not passing but, rather, selective and adaptive. Both sides in such an imperial encounter are interlinked, if nothing else through strategies of

[101] Ibid.

[102] ibid., 2.

dominance and resistance."[103] A static, 'faithfully reproducing model' has been projected for Nubia and Egypt, however this was never the case. Nile Valley civilization is arguably the longest continuously documented civilization, and over thousands of years, numerous changes occurred in all realms of significance: it was never static, although *some* recurrent underlying philosophies unique to the region are observable. Since Nubia had developed international trade with the Middle East before Egypt had, it was a cosmopolitan culture from the start, with this practice moving from south to north in Africa as Middle Eastern trade goods eventually arrived above the First Cataract. "Egypt" needed "Nubia" more than Nubia needed Egypt, therefore one of the underlying themes of their interaction sphere is:

> "Egypt adopted both peaceful and militaristic strategies of contact over time and space, but always geared toward securing valuable resources. Imperial expansion secured control over key trade routes and sources of sumptuary goods including ebony, ivory, incense, gold from Nubia. Gold and luxury products were central to the Egyptian state's political economy, serving as tools of legitimization through display and the creation of patronage relationships through redistribution. At the same time, individuals used these sumptuary goods for their own purposes through conspicuous consumption, especially among the elite and middle class. Although a redistributive system characterized the state

[103] ibid.

> economy, a thriving private sector sought to acquire these goods for themselves and accumulate wealth by acquiring these and other goods by themselves if possible, without the help of Pharoah. This basic historical and economic background represents a point of departure for deeper investigation of colonial identities and dynamics at Askut and Tombos."[104]

Dr. Smith asserts that regardless how abundant materials are (*i.e.* artifacts found *in situ*, monuments, statues), this does not specify a definitive ethnic group affiliation although people often take this for granted: "No single material correlate, no matter how abundantly represented, unambiguously reflects ethnic group affiliation." [105] People are confused about the meaning of ethnicity, and they assumed that the concept is bounded and absolute. This has never been the case. Some definitions of ethnicity include language, religion, and genetics. Definitions of *ethos* (Greek) and *natio* (Roman) attempted to embody group identity in a portable way, but upon closer scrutiny they are problematic. "As far back as 445 BC, the Greek Historian Herodotus defined Greek *ethnos* as *the kinship of all Greeks in blood and speech and the shrines of gods and the sacrifices that we have in common, and the likeness of our way of life*."[106] Other scholars add to this definition geographic territory, descent, self-awareness, and culture. If this is true, then is a person born into a Lakota family, who doesn't speak Lakota, Lakota? Is a person who is born in China, and their parents move to the USA and the

[104] ibid., 8.

[105] ibid.

[106] ibid., 10.

child only speaks English, Chinese? If language doesn't hold up as an absolute for ethnicity, what about the other alleged components? Was a child born in Egypt whose father was in the Medjay army of Egypt, Egyptian? Why or why not? As a result of this, the pejorative characterizations that we have become so accustomed to present more problems than answers. (There is *something* there, but once we try to explain it in empirical terms, our difficulty begins.) The quest for *primordial solidarity* appears to have plagued humanity for the past 5,000 years, and it continues to do so; as a matter of fact, the Western world has become obsessed with doing so, and this has been imposed on the interpretation of African archaeological sites. This is reflected in the "primitivist view of ethnicity" that has guided the archaeological investigation of Nubia and Egypt:

> "In archaeology, the primitivist view of ethnicity was a central feature of the methodology of culture history. Archaeological 'cultures' were equated with bounded and immutable ethnic units. This allowed archaeologists to define groups for study but, perhaps more importantly, to trace the movement of peoples. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many, if not most, archaeologists viewed migration as the prime mover in explaining cultural change. This approach has been and continues to be misused to support nationalistic, imperialist and racist agendas. One classic early example is Petrie's creation of a 'dynastic race' to explain the rise in Egyptian civilization, a position that was still championed by Walter Emery long after the concept had been discarded. Petrie posited that it

> was not black Africans, but a superior white or at best brown 'race', migrating to Egypt from the north, who produced the periods and the other great cultural achievements of ancient the Egyptians."[107]

Notions of Primordial Solidarity in Nubia and Egypt

The archaeological evidence now refutes Petrie and Emery's conclusions, but the damage has been done... It may appear to be an insurmountable challenge to initiate a cognitive shift, regarding Nubia and Egypt, however this is no longer a deterrent thanks to the growing body of published research that is emerging. The Egyptians devised pejorative divisions of groups that they encountered: "Three primary ethnic 'others' bounded the Egyptian *ethnos*, the Libyans to the north and west, Asiatics to the north and east, and Nubians to the south. The solar theology explicitly acknowledges these different ethnic groups. In a similar way, the Hellenistic worldview surrounded the Greeks with four barbarian peoples, the Celts, Scythians, Persians, and Libyans."[108] The purpose of creating "other" groups was twofold, in that it created a hierarchy in which the *identifying* group was at the top, and it created a 'justification' for subduing and subjecting these presumed other groups. In ancient Egypt, skin color was not a barrier within the society as it is in the modern world. For example, if a person from another group assimilated into Egyptian society by adopting its common customs — that was perfectly acceptable. "Nubians like the

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[107] ibid., 14.

[108] ibid., 21.

soldier and royal confidant Mahirper achieved high position in Egyptian society so long as they assimilated to Egyptian cultural norms. Mahirper was raised at the Egyptian court with a future Pharoah, and so may have been the son of a Nubian prince. He was buried in the Valley of the Kings, a privilege reserved only for kings and their immediate relatives"[109] All of the groups known to the Egyptians freely married in Egypt, and they are depicted in their lavish tombs with their Egyptian wives; they often held the highest offices as well, so the society was a meritocracy in the most quantifiable way. Thus in ancient Egypt, "It was the cultural identity of immigrants to Egypt that mattered to their success in Egyptian society, not their skin color or ancestry." [110] However, in their homelands, these foreigners presented a threat to Egyptian imperialism, and this was the motivation behind the gross misrepresentations of these various groups, Egyptians sometimes referring to them as "wild animals." The propaganda was overt for "Not only were foreigners wretched cowards, they were not people at all. A decorated box from the tomb of Tutankhamen shows the king in his chariot, larger than life, defeating Nubians and Asiatics on either side as easily as he hunts animals in the desert."[111]

As a result of the interaction between Egyptians, Nubians, Libyans, and Asiatics it was a complex sphere of influence that cannot be characterized very simply. Rather, identities were negotiated in tandem with changing political, economic, and social circumstances. This has not been reflected in the bulk of the literature that has been published regarding the relationship

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[109] ibid., 22.

[110] ibid., 23-24.

[111] Ibid, 26.

between Nubia and Egypt. Ancient Egypt was a dynamic, cosmopolitan society; the so-called Asiatics who were connected with Tigris-Euphrates civilization, and Anatolian civilization, brought features that actually predated Egyptian civilization in many ways (*e.g.* Natufians in Jericho). The twelfth honesty pharoah Amenemhet I provides an example of the openness of Egyptian society. Born to a Nubian mother, Amenemhet I was of common birth, not royal. His father named Senwosret, and his mother Nefret, were known to be from Elephantine:

> "Amenemhet I was a commoner, the son of one Senwosret and a woman named Nefret, listed as prominent members of a family from Elephantine Island. Amenhemet I potrayed himself as a true unifier of Egypt after years of decline and partial separation. Various prophecies, including the famous one written by Nefer-rohu, were made public to guarantee authenticity for the new pharaoh's claims. The prophecy of Nefer-rohu, also called Neferti, describes Amenemhet I as the son of 'a woman of Nubia', (or of the Elephantine area in modern Aswan). Having had years of experience as a vizier, Amenemhet knew how to force the Egyptians to accept his rule. He commanded a fleet of ships and sailed throughout the land to demand obeisance from the people. He married Nefru-totenen, who is believed to have borne Senwosret I, the heir. A second queen, Sit-Hathor, gave birth to Princess Dedyet (1) and Princess Nenseb-djebet. Later in his reign a woman named Nefru-Sobek (2) became his

queen. He had two daughters: Nefrusheri and Nyetneb."[112]

Elephantine Island is north of Aswan, and it was considered to be in Nubia 4,000 years ago. The harem of Amemenhet I proved to be his undoing, and plots to assassinate him were hatched: they were persistent, for the first assassination attempted failed, but the second was a success and Amenemehet I's son Senwosret I, who had been appointed by the pharaoh as co-regent before his assassination, was able to secure the throne of Egypt after vanquishing the usurpers. "Senwosret I, who campaigned militarily in his father's name, was in the desert region when word came of the assassination. He raced back to the capitol with a large force and routed the enemies of his inheritance. Amenemhet was buried in a pyramid at Lisht, called 'Horus of Repeating Births', now in ruins."[113] These pharaohs and all of their descendents, who were actually of Nubian ancestry, are seldom, if ever, identified as such in the literature on ancient Egypt.

The Misrepresentation of Nubians in Ancient Egypt

Here, we can see how the use of artifacts, and the attribution of a distinct, bounded ethnicity or culture confuses the actual facts of the situation. Since the Twelfth Dynasty's cultural identity has been *classified* as *Egyptian*, then they *became* Egyptians to archaeologists and Egyptologists, although their genetic ancestry was actually Nubian. To undo this

[112] Margaret R. Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2002) 25-26.

[113] ibid., 26.

misrepresentation of Nubians in Egypt, in the minds of archaeologists and Egyptologists, is probably impossible, although the facts are *staring them in the face*. "For the great mass of the ancient Egyptian and Nubian populations, artifacts are the only way of establishing ethnic identity. But what can archaeology, which deals after all in objects not thoughts, contribute to an understanding ethnic identity? Some argue that such an attempt is futile."[114]

A reliance on writing is used to overcome the limitations of archaeology, in that *ethnicity* is derived from what is written, mainly by elites. However, "Written documents can supply a direct statement of ethnic identity. Material culture, however, also plays a critical role in the creation and assertion of ethnic identity. In spite of the self-referential and situational nature of ethnic identities, ancient ethnicity can be examined archaeologically through a careful contextual approach." [115] Although it may seem quite simple, there is a problem in correlating material culture with ethnic identity. This has been encountered on numerous occasions, especially in the case of associating Assyrians with Anatolia *c.*1850 BCE for example, which was achieved through the use of written records, for no distinction could be made on the basis of artifacts: "The middle Assyrian colonies (*c.* 1850 BC) placed as enclaves within eastern Anatolian cities are unidentifiable archaeologically. The only reason that we know that they were Assyrian is through the correspondence that they left behind."[116]

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[114] Stuart Tyson Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 30.

[115] ibid., 31.

[116] ibid.

Dr. Smith asserts that there is a problem, moving 'from artifacts, to people', that is, can an artifact discern *ethnicity*? Also, does the absence of an artifact deny or confirm *ethnicity*? These seemingly simply questions are actually some of the most difficult that you can ask, and the answers to them are far from forthcoming… "If the material assemblage is 90 percent Egyptian, does that mean that the people *were* Egyptian? At what percentage would they become something else? Both Rogers (1990) and Farnsworth (1992) caution against the use of simple percentages of indigenous vs. imperial material culture as an index of interaction and cultural transformation."[117] Egyptian burial practices have a high profile, and they differ from Nubian burial practices by the time of the Old Kingdom; however they had a common origin, and they diverged over time. From the tomb of Djer, the shared burial practice of sacrificing about 570 human retainers is verified, in tandem with about 450 human retainers in Nubia's *Deffufa*; eventually, human retainers were discontinued in Nubia and Egypt, replaced by animal sacrifices and statues that 'represented' human retainers.

Burial practices are actually ideological, that is, they are based on beliefs of 'what is going to happen' after death. The divergence of Egyptian in Nubian burial practices center upon the probability of differences in their belief systems. According to Egyptian ideology, after death a person will go to the *Hall of Maati* where they will be met by the 42 judges (Judgment Day), in order to have their heart weighed against a feather, after having recited their *Negative Confessions* (the list of negative Confessions, *e.g.* "I have not snared sacred birds," "I have not stolen," "I have not killed," *etc.* is available in *The Husia*). So, if

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[117] ibid., 35.

their heart weighs less than a feather, the judges will give them a pass and it is *hunting, fishing, partying, and all, forever*: but if the heart is too heavy, due to bad acting during one's life, a vicious animal will devour their heart, and it's over. That was the 'idea' behind the elaborate funerary rituals, mummification (because they thought that the body was going to be needed in the afterlife), and such. In reality, no one knew what was going to happen after death: they just *thought* that they did, but the answer to that is extracorporeal.

Insinuating Ethnicity from Artifacts

Today, people believe that after they die, they are going to *Heaven* (wherever that is, because no one has been able to locate it yet), or possibly somewhere *south* of *Heaven*, with a warmer climate; the ideas that people believe in today came from Egyptian ideology dating to about 6,000 years ago (but it was not written down until about 5,000 years ago). The Washington Monument, which cracked in 2011 due to an earthquake, is an Egyptian obelisk: so if it collapses, and someone finds it 5,000 years from now without any documentation, will it suggest that the Egyptians were here? There is one in Paris, one in Rome, *etc*. Insinuating *ethnicity* from ancient artifacts, pejoratively, seems to be somewhat wrongheaded; however, this has been done so unreflectingly in archaeology (and history) that it is the norm. Scholars are aiming at a moving target that refuses to stand still: the only constant of human subsistence is change, which complicates things, like establishing an 'absolute ethnicity', quantitatively or qualitatively.

To some degree, we are able to discover why things change in socio-cultural domains, but for some of the most important

things, we don't even have the answer: how did *Agriculture* begin? Not knowing *that* complicates our understanding of the dynamism of socio-cultural change, and interaction, in antiquity. "Direct evidence for the kinds of food consumed can be had through floral and faunal analysis, but this still leaves us with the difficulty of establishing just which kinds of flora and fauna are associated with Egyptian and Nubian in cuisines. One possible complication lies in the environmental similarity between Egypt and Nubia."[118] The fact that the Egyptians wrote down the *Omomasticon of Amenemope* recording their 40+ types of bread, 23 types of beer, 29 cuts of beef and how they could be prepared different ways, says nothing about their Nubian contemporaries' foodstuffs; however, since the exotic products had to come through Nubia, it is possible that they had access to even more exotic foodstuffs: they were not writing it down, though. On the face of it, Egypt would seem like a 'more complex' or 'more developed' society, which those enamored with *Civilization* narcissistically identify with; this plays into the 'Wretched Kush' epithet. "Sheep/goat, cow, and pig were also the main fauna consumed in Egypt as well as Nubia, with the addition of hunted birds, fish, and shellfish from the Nilotic environment."[119] In conjunction with grain-based products, their access to foodstuffs were not markedly different, although Nubians were considered to be 'primitive' by comparison in the Egyptian propaganda. While other ancient archaeological sites show distinct differences in the foodstuffs consumed by archaeologically-defined ethnic groups, in proximity, no such differences existed in Nubia and

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[118] ibid., 51

[119] ibid., 52

Egypt. Indeed, "States and cultures do not interact, people do"[120] which leads to interchanges or selective adoptions, both ways. Egypt is portrayed as the 'core' of civilization, while Nubia is portrayed as a 'peripheral community' that is dominated by Egypt, and looks to it for *Culture*; Egyptian imperialism is seen in this model as a 'civilizing mission', which also plays well with Western scholars. "This classic model of core dominance and peripheral subordination downplays native agency. In Kemp's acculturation model, Nubians simply go along with Egyptian policy, abandoning their own cultural traditions in favor of Egyptian cultural norms."[121]

The problem that Egypt faced, as far as its imperial expansion, was that the more it extended itself, the more difficult it became to control Nubia; and Nubia was, in significant ways on par with Egypt, therefore it asserted its dominance, respectively. This would not have been possible, had Nubia been as "wretched" as the Egyptians' propaganda often claimed. Pharonic tradition stipulated that each pharoah should 'extend the lands of Egypt beyond the boundaries of one's father': this proved to be a disastrous policy on numerous occasions, although sometimes it seemed to work. The New Kingdom was able to stretch itself past the Fourth Cataract, but this was not to last. (The Roman Empire had the same problem. It collapsed when it became unmanageable, due to its own imperialistic successes: the Western Empire collapsed first, but the Eastern Empire was able to maintain some semblance of control.) Imperialists seem to think that they are operating in isolation; however they eventually come to find that there are other imperialists, with even stronger

[120] Ibid., 54.

[121] ibid., 58.

'core' civilizations that displace them. Underlying the *imperialistic zeal* seems to be the addiction to luxury goods of the elites; they hired armies to do their bidding, so they were not personally involved in actual conquest. However, the desire for exotic commodities was not restricted to Egyptian and Nubian elites only, for entrepreneurs were involved in foreign trade networks as well. Trade was probably the precursor to invasion; however, royal families were committed to extracting what they wanted from their neighbors by both methods. Some scholars argue that trade was economically unimportant in antiquity, for coins were not used before the seventh or eighth century BCE, and the 'value' of goods would have been static: use-value only. Such a scenario suggests that humanity had to wait until modern times for products to have value differentiations; again, this seems completely narcissistic, because the modern world is simply repeating what occurred during the emergence of civilization: we're not doing anything new in the marketplace.

Egypt's Dependence on *Inw*

Egypt was dependent upon *Inw*, the tribute from foreign colonies like Nubia or independent states that sent annual 'gifts' to the pharaoh (these processions are oft repeated in Egyptian murals); the gold fields were in Nubia, and tons of gold flowed into Egypt during its imperialistic phases. The foreign territories were coerced to increase their *Inw* every year, and they were punished or rewarded based on their compliance, or the lack thereof. The income was recorded and used as propaganda by the pharaoh, raising his social status as a powerbroker; in turn, the *Inw* was used to fund state operations, and rewards could be manipulated in order to strengthen dynastic support. Egypt was

also after Nubia's abundant cattle, which was the economic emphasis in the region. "The Nubian gold dedicated yearly to the Temple of Amun at Thebes, a fraction of the total flowing into Egypt, could support 9,000 to 17,000 unskilled workmen and 1,600 to 3,100 skilled craftsmen a year."[122]

Lower Nubia was sparsely populated in the third and second millennium BCE, therefore the Egyptian population may have been at least twenty times its size, or more: this made it an easy target for the Egyptians, who did not live far away. However, further south "The Egyptians encountered the Kerma civilization, which stretched from the second to fourth cataracts, a region known as Kush, and perhaps extended further south. It supported a population in the neighborhood of 200,000."[123] With a population of this size, Kush was militarily competitive with Egypt, and it eventually became the seat of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty that controlled both Nubia and Egypt, which was not *a fluke*. Kush had been a major world civilization for thousands of years already, before its rulers moved north to build the largest of the Nile Valley Civilizations.

The Middle Kingdom's founder Nebhetepre Mentuhotep occupied and rebuilt the fortress at Buhen, in order to exploit the resources of Lower Nubia:

> "He set in motion a process that led to the absorption of Lower Nubia into a territorial empire guarded by some of the most impressive fortifications ever created in the ancient world. The well-preserved walls at Buhen included

[122] ibid., 72.

[123] ibid., 75.

> elaborate systems of revetments, bastions, and towers with specially designed loopholes allowing archers to fire in every direction. In the succeeding reigns, Middle Kingdom pharaohs built and expanded this series of massive fortresses situated at the population centers along the Nile. The large fortified towns of Buhen and Mirgissa lay at either end of the worst rapids, facilitating and administering trade with the south. About 1850 BC, Senwosret III completed the consolidation of the new colony when he finished a chain of six massive forts that provided a hardened frontier a few kilometers south of the second cataract."[124]

With the building of massive fortifications, the Egyptian military presence appeared to be dominant, but after about 300 years, all of this collapsed in the face of Kerma's rising power and the domination of Lower Egypt by the Hyksos. There are no definitive records that tell us how Egypt went from being a seemingly dominant superpower (based on the architecture and written records), to be overcome on two fronts by the Hyksos, and the Nubians, simultaneously. "By around 1680 BC, the Hyksos emerged as a power at the city of Avaris, taking over more and more responsibility for the northern trade. In the south, the Kerman rulers had consolidated their hold over Upper Nubia. No one knows exactly what happened next. The ancient Egyptians tell of a swift Hyksos invasion that deposed the last ruler of the thirteenth dynasty."[125] This strongly suggests that the

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[124] ibid.

[125] ibid., 79.

Egyptians never enjoyed complete hegemony, even though they had trade relationships with both the Near East and Kerma. The civilizations of the Near East predated Egypt by thousands of years, and Nubia predated Egypt as well. This made the Egyptians the 'newcomers' in the civilization circle of the Old World, therefore the Hyksos did not suddenly arrive out of nowhere; alliances had been made between the Nubians and the Hyksos, and there is evidence that their correspondence was intercepted by the Egyptians periodically. Remember, Nubia had trade relations with the Near East as far back as the fourth millennium BCE, a time when the Egyptian burials were devoid of Near East trade goods:

> "By the end of the thirteen dynasty the Kermans moved into Lower Nubia, not in a violent conquest as has often been suggested, but by coopting the old Egyptian infrastructure of fortress-settlements. The old boundaries proved surprisingly resilient under the new regime. Kerma's boundary expanded north to the first cataract, simply absorbing the Lower Nubian colony. Archaeologically, Kermans are attested in small numbers in Lower Nubia through their distinctive burial practices, but the colony was run using hegemonic strategy coopting Egyptian administrators like Ka and Sepedhor of Buhen, the descendants of the colonists who had established the Middle Kingdom fortress system over 100 years before. Their stelae indicate

> clearly that they had shifted their allegiance from Pharaoh to the Kerman ruler of Kush."[126]

The Collaboration Between Nubians and the Hyksos

With the rise of Thutmose I in Egypt, Nubia was invaded, and Kerma was sacked around 1,500 BC; the Hyksos were also routed. This led to the largest land mass ever obtained by the Egyptian pharaoh, stretching from about the Fifth Cataract in the south to the Levant in the east (the Old Kingdom was small by comparison, although its pharaohs were revered by later dynasties as "The Great Ones" since they had built the pyramids and the Sphinx; pyramid building declined in Egypt after the Second Intermediate Period, but it flourished in Nubia well into the first millennium AD). The New Kingdom's invasion of Nubia led to new forms of interrelations, and much of the Nubian infrastructure was maintained. There appears to have been a great deal of negotiation in the process, and agreements appear to have had mutual benefits. The Nubian royalty was not merely pushed aside; rather, they were co-opted just as the Nubians had co-opted the Egyptians during the Second Intermediate Period:

> At its height, the New Kingdom empire included both Upper and Lower Nubia and most of the Levant. In the south, the old administrative boundaries keyed to the cataracts again proved durable. The administration of Nubia was placed under a single official, the Viceroy of Kush, who

[126] ibid., 80.

> lived in Egypt at Thebes until the later New Kingdom when he was based in Aniba. The viceroy had two 'deputies', one in charge of Wawat and the other in charge of Kush, recognizing the geographical and cultural divisions of Lower and Upper Nubia respectively. Nubians rose as high as the rank 'deputy' and filled many of the posts in the colonial administration. Beneath them, Nubian princes administered the countryside, and mayors managed urban centers, including most of the old fortress communities.

During this time we see a major socio-cultural transformation in Nubia, and Nubians elites operating in what has been designated as 'Egyptian' cultural norms. As administrators, Nubians would have learned to speak Egyptian language and write in hieroglyphs; they also adopted more of the Egyptian burial customs, selectively: "The Nubian bureaucratic elite depict themselves in their tombs and monuments with all the markers of Egyptian ethnicity. In layout, decoration, and grave goods, their tombs were identical to their counterparts in Egypt."[127] The transformation of the Nubian population to Egyptian customs was calculated, not accidental. The Nubian elite played a major role in this transformation, working in the service of Egypt. "The continuing presence of Egyptians in Nubia may help to explain the rapid acculturation of the Nubian elite, who gradually brought the rest of Nubian society into the Egyptian cultural

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[127] ibid., 85.

sphere."[128] This convergence complicates the concepts of Nubia and Egypt as a whole, and the separate identities that are generally ascribed to them: they had always been neighbors. However, as one moves away from the core of Egyptian civilization's power base, there is less evidence of Egyptian acculturation in Nubia. Again, in the specter of imperialism, as a state grows larger, it is less capable of managing its distant 'conquered' territories: numerous surveys have been made in Nubia but "None of these expeditions uncovered evidence for substantial Egyptianized imperial culture or even colonial occupation south of the third cataract. The only clearly Egyptian sites are in Tombos, Kawa, and Gebel Barkal."[129]

There was a similar situation in other areas that the Egyptians supposedly conquered in what is modern-day Syria and Palestine. According to the archaeological evidence, there is no major presence of Egyptianized culture, and local royalty held on to power, based on Egyptian guidelines: this included the Egyptian practice of using sons of local rulers as hostages, and co-opting them:

> "As was also the case in Nubia, sons of local rulers were taken as hostages to Egypt and trained at court in a classic method of co-opting elites reminiscent of modern British imperialism. Otherwise there was no particular interest in acculturation. As Redford points out, these co-opted princes trod a thin line between their Egyptian overlords and local populations, and so

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[128] ibid.

[129] ibid., 94.

> could not have maintained too strong an Egyptian ethnicity for fear of appearing to subservient to Egyptian interests."[130]

Therefore, in most of the territories that were conquered by Egypt, local traditions remained intact, and Egyptian artifacts were imported as prestige items for the elites.

Both in the Near East and Nubia, there is evidence of the Egyptian occupation; however, it is not overt. *One* overt feature of the Egyptian culture that did strongly take hold in the Levant is the *Negative Confessions* that a person would be expected to say in the Hall of Maati after they die. There were over 40 negative confessions, which the person would have to say to the 42 judges on Judgment Day in the Hall of Maati, including that they had not, for example "Done crimes against people, mistreated cattle, ordered someone to kill, caused pain, caused tears, snared sacred birds, made anyone suffer, blasphemed a god, stolen cakes from the dead, cheated in the fields, copulated or defiled oneself," and so on, with 42 Negative Confessions: this was eventually reduced to *The Ten Commandments*.

The Spread of African Belief Systems

The impact of the Egyptians' belief system regarding the afterlife, and judgment day, cannot be underestimated, because it is being employed by the major religions in the Western world, the Middle East, and beyond; however, few are aware of the fact that this scheme originated in ancient Nubia and Egypt where pharonic tradition began. Indeed, this is a monumentally

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[130] ibid.

important, unrecognized African contribution to world civilization, for good or ill. If the rest of the Negative Confessions were added to *The Ten Commandments*, people would probably forget them, and if they did remember them all, they would have trouble accomplishing what they stipulated (and maybe that is why they were reduced to ten, after the Negative Confessions arrived in the Levant). As Margaret Bunson has noted, the Negative Confessions were:

> "Part of the mortuary rituals of ancient Egypt now called the "Declarations of Innocence," this text was developed by various priests of the temples to aid the deceased when in the presence of the 42 judges in the Judgment Halls of Osiris. The confessions were to be recited to establish the moral virtue of the deceased and his or her right to eternal bliss. The Negative Confessions detail some of the ethical and moral concerns of the various eras in Egypt, expressing the aspirations and acknowledgement of personal responsibility for actions. The confessions included
>
> I have not stolen
> I have not plundered
> I have not slain people
> I have not committed a crime
> I have not stolen property of a god
> I have not said lies
> I have not cursed
> I have not copulated with another man
> I have not copulated with another man's wife
> I have not caused any one to weep
> I have not eaten my heart (indulged in despair)

I have not led anyone astray
I have not gossiped
I have not slandered
I have not been contentious in affairs
I have not caused terror
I have not become heatedly angry
I have not eavesdropped
I have not made anyone angry
I have not made anyone hungry"[131]

These are not all of the confessions: there are more. Can you imagine people in today's world reciting such confessions, before or after death? If they followed this today, many people would have to *go away*, and many businesses would be finished. The eavesdropping, gossiping, and cursing would knock a few people out of the ballpark, right off the bat; the copulation issue would take most of the rest of them out, especially the politicians! (The complete list might hurt, after a bit of soul-searching: let's just hope that nobody's keeping score.)

Amen, which people today say all of the time, is the name of an Egyptian god, the highest god in the pantheon recorded at Thebes:

> "The gods Seth and Horus represent the legacy of prehistoric periods when respectively Naqada and Hierakonpolis were in turn centres of importance in Upper Egypt. Thebes was to fill this role from the Eleven Dynasty onwards, with its temple eventually becoming the principal cult center in Upper Egypt and its god Amen/Amen-Ra gaining a dominant position in the theology

[131] Margaret Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Facts on File, 2002) 272.

of kingship. Memphis also had this symbolic role, justified in the Memphite Theology, but it acted less effectively in the north in times of weak central government."[132]

The Egyptians apparently occupied Askut for one main purpose: to extract its substantial gold deposits. Nubians and Egyptians melded, in close proximity, and the archaeological record here reflects a blend of both the Egyptian influence and the Nubian influence, when the contextualization of the artifacts is taken into consideration: "The resulting patterns in some cases match expectations derived from the historical sequence outlined above, but inconsistencies revealed through a more detailed contextual analysis pose questions about the implementation of imperial policy and ethnic identity at Askut."[133] The Egyptian architecture at the site took advantage of the island's natural topography, and elements of Nubian architecture were incorporated into the design of the forts. During the Middle Kingdom and the New Kingdom, there are an abundance of artifacts that have survived at Askut, and they can be attributed to Egyptian design. However, many other artifacts at the site can neither be attributed to Egyptian nor Nubian design exclusively, due to their shared history; as a matter of fact, ceremonial grindstones found at the site serve as an example of how closely related Nubian and Egyptian cultural practices were, with the Nubian practice having been adopted by "Egyptians" at some point in antiquity. This speaks to the

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[132] Trigger, B.G, Kemp, B.J., O'Connor, D., and Lloyd, A.B., *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 178.

[133] Stuart Tyson Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 97.

inseparable common origin of these two increasingly divergent domains, for example:

> "Two groundstone axes are the only tools that fit distinctively into a Nubian cultural framework. Each was made of green granular serpentine, one light and the other dark, a favored material of Nubian celts. Three other stone axes used by a T-shaped design derived from Egyptian metal forms. This style of stone axe occurs in both Egypt and Nubia and so is probably not culturally diagnostic. Nubian groundstone axes like the two from Askut were a common funerary offering, particularly earlier in Nubian in history, but are also found in periods contemporary to the occupation of Askut. They are often highly finished and without wear, serving as an important cultural marker for Nubians, especially Kermans."[134]

Since both groups were in close proximity as a result of colonialism from the Middle Kingdom to the New Kingdom (possibly with a significant break, during the Second Intermediate Period), there is definitely a sharing of tradition across 'ethnic' boundaries, depending on the popularity of the jewelry style, or tool's material (*e.g.* copper and bronze tools would have become more popular over time, replacing previously used materials). "A shard from a variegated glass vessel reflects the prosperity of the community during the New Kingdom. Glass vessels were introduced into Egypt sometime

[134] Ibid., 106.

after 1,500 BC. The technology was probably acquired during the imperial expansion into Syria."[135] During the Second Intermediate Period, the Kermans appeared to have been benevolent rulers, because Egyptians did not flee the Lower Nubian sites that they had occupied during the Middle Kingdom, in mass; rather, they simply shifted their allegiance to the Ruler of Kush from the Egyptian core, and remained where they were. Both the Egyptians and the Nubians practiced a form of indirect rule, once they had established their military superiority. This led to a great deal of variation, over the extensive geographic area which contained Nubia, Egypt, and Syro-Palestine, and over the thousands of years involved in the process. "Nubian cookpots are disproportionately represented at Askut, starting out at a high level and increasing steadily over time to dominate the cooking assemblage. This pattern indicates a deeper level of interaction."[136] Although the Egyptians had all of the materials for the large-scale manufacturing of their own pottery types, it appears that they may have preferred Nubian pottery for their cooking, and adopted it. Cultural adaptations are selective during colonial occupations, and some invaded populations make concerted efforts to maintain their cultural identity, through dress, adornment styles, foodways, funerary practices, language, and architectural design. "A small fertility figurine in typical Nubian style found near the shrine in the house of Meryka, implies the maintenance or synchronization of personal religious beliefs between the Egyptian colonists and resident Nubians during the New Kingdom."[137] Meryka had one of the most

[135] ibid., 112.

[136] ibid., 116.

[137] ibid., 131.

elaborate, well-appointed houses in Askut: religious beliefs were traded and/or adopted between Egyptians and Nubians (the Hittites are possibly the most renowned for doing this in the ancient world, since they eventually adopted *hundreds of gods* into their pantheon, as their imperial activities expanded, creating widespread confusion).

Significantly, the Egyptian cultural tradition of pyramid building, which was the practice of stacking multiple *mastbas* invented by Imhotep during the Old Kingdom, ceased in Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty when the Valley of the Kings was built; however, the practice was adopted and maintained in Nubia: "Up until the early eighteenth dynasty, only Pharaohs had pyramid tombs. By the mid-eighteenth dynasty, both elite tomb complexes in Egypt and colonial cemeteries in Nubia like Aniba and Soleb often included small pyramids made of mud-brick with attached chapels."[138] The mastaba and pyramid designs grew out of the predynastic shaft burial tradition, and over thousands of years this melded with the dynamic belief systems of the region, forming elaborate spectacles that suggested earthly and divine power: but they were all plundered in antiquity, because these spectacles of power were facades, since the pharaohs were not even able to protect them from robbers, in their own time. Inscribed funerary cones later appear in the tombs of Egypt and Nubia, exemplifying that methods were not static; the tomb of Siamun and his wife Weren at Tombos, who was an important administrator for the Egyptians in Nubia, attest to the export, exchange, and integration of practices and beliefs. Therefore, between 3,500 BCE and 1,500 BCE (a two-thousand year period, which is even longer than the existence of most civilizations),

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[138] ibid., 138-139.

customs and practices underwent tremendous changes as they were adapted to the shifting local circumstances: there changes and practices were not directional, *per se*, leading to some absolute, concrete identity although modern scholars portray them as such. At Tombos, we see that:

> "Architecture, material culture, extended burial position, evidence of mummification, and signs of funerary feasts around the pyramid reflect a strong adherence to Egyptian funerary rituals at Tombos. On the other hand, none of these burials apparently received Canopic sets indicating full mummification, and few specialized grave goods that reflect a belief in the Osirian afterlife, like *ushabtis*, were recovered. The poor preservation of organics explains the absence of some items, like fragile papyrus copies of the *Book of the Dead*, but nevertheless the scarcity of amulets and other items that should have survived begs the question: did the individuals at Tombos really uphold Egyptian funerary beliefs? In their analysis of the cemetery at Fadrus, Säve-Söderbergh and Troy (1991) correctly point out that the simple presence of Egyptian material culture and an extended burial position does not necessarily indicate an acceptance of Egyptian religious beliefs. This provincial cemetery provides important evidence for the transition to New Kingdom rule, including the gradual replacement of Nubian-style burials by Egyptian

> burial practice in the Lower Nubian principality of Tekhet."[139]

The One-Sided Interpretation of Nubia's Past

Whether this is evidence of the status of the tomb owner, or cultural change adoption, remains in question; for example, wooden *ushabtis* would not have survived if they had been interred in antiquity. However, discoveries like this exemplify a negotiated cultural interaction, adoption, and transition. After the collapse of the New Kingdom, selective cultural practices in Nubia that occurred during the Egyptian occupation remained. In conjunction with this finding, Nubians buried in the flexed position were also found in tombs at this site, so burial methods may have been chosen by individuals, and their wishes were carried out after their deaths. The interpretation of Nubia's past has been decidedly one-sided, as researchers have relied upon Egyptian texts in order to discern what it was. The Egyptians who were in the business of supplying this information were in the service of the pharaohs, intent upon self-aggrandizement. As Dr. Peter Gay pointed out in *Style in History*:

> "Most historians preside over the construction of the collective memory. And they are not architects whose patrons have given them a free hand. They are under pressure to design an impressive, even a glorious façade that may bear only a tangential resemblance to the structure of events concealed behind them... It has all too often been the historian's assignment to assist his

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[139] ibid., 155.

> culture in remembering events that did not happen, and in forgetting events that did. The culture wants the past it can use."[140]

Regarding the validity of what the Egyptians wrote, there is the glaring example of misrepresentation that is challenged by the writings of the Hittites. In the case of the Nubians, there are no contemporary writings that we can cross-check, in order to verify whether the accounts are factual. There are numerous murals, and writings, that were commissioned by Ramesses II the Great that glorify his victory at the Battle of Qadesh, where he supposedly defeated the Hittites although *he was virtually all alone*. Certainly, a feat like this would take on divine implications: but how accurate is Ramesses II's account of the Battle of Qadesh? Fortunately, the 'other side' was a literate culture, and they were able to discredit Ramesses the Great's version of the event: "When the Hittite King heard of Ramesses' version of the event, he sent an annoyed note asking if this negative portrait of his brethren was consistent with their new peace treaty, ending with a derisive note mocking the Pharoah, asking, if Ramesses really *was* alone, where his chariots in his soldiers were."[141]

If Ramesses II had won the battle of Qadesh, why did he have to sign a peace treaty with the Hittite King? Why didn't the divine pharaoh simply take what he wanted, as Egyptian philosophy dictated? It is because on the battlefield, myth and philosophy are often left behind. The fact that a peace treaty was signed is evidence that the victory that Ramesses II claimed did

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140 Peter Gay, *Style in History* (New York: Norton, 1988) 206.

141 Stuart Tyson Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 171.

not actually occur; he created a myth about his military prowess, and thrust it upon the people of Egypt, with a vengeance. Without the account of the Hittite King, and the subsequent peace treaty, one could surmise from the Egyptian records that Ramesses II won the Battle of Qadesh, but he/she would be wrong. If this account is inaccurate, could there be others? It appears that in antiquity, and even today, the writers of history are always either the winners, or on the right side: they are never in the wrong, rather, they are responding to the 'evil forces' that threaten stability and peace… Mainly, this type of propaganda is effectively used to seduce the hometown crowd:

> Why did Ramesses continue to insist in this patently false account that he single-handedly defeated a vast host led by the Hittite King? Liverani (1990) provides a solution to this conundrum. He argues that the ideological *topos* applied to external interactions within ancient Near East states was aimed at legitimizing moral authority to an internal audience, and was therefore often divorced from the practical functioning of empire and international relations. To the inner audience, Egypt becomes a center of the world, and all the foreign lands bow down to Pharaoh. Whether or not these claims had any basis in fact was irrelevant; the importance of imperial ideologies lay not in actual control, but rather in the ruler's prestige in the central kingdom."[142]

[142] Ibid., 171-172.

The archaeological evidence in Nubia supports this perspective since Egypt claimed to control all of the vast territories of Nubia, however this claim was more ideological than practical. Negotiation played a major part in the interactions, and relationships, between the ancient powers. Whether they wanted to or not, rulers had to respect their neighbors and adversaries, because they were working with the same materials, and would essentially be able to gain comparable military and political strength over time: there was no 'atomic bomb'. In this way, Nubians and "Asiatics" had been able to sack Egypt on numerous occasions, which does not present a paradigm for ubiquitous Egyptian power. The unparalleled monumental architecture of Egypt, in conjunction with the vast store of writings dating back 5,250 years, have combined to distort the realities of Nubia and Egypt in antiquity. Also, since *Civilization* in the Ancient Near East predated Nile Valley civilization by at least 2,000 - 3,000 years or more (although sedentary living in Africa was roughly contemporary with sites in the Levant), Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the Levant were always a factor in the region. Internally, there were numerous plots to assassinate pharaohs that have been identified between the Old Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period, including the well-known assassination of Ramesses III that may have been planned by his wives and concubines. The importance of Kush to the functioning of Egypt's grand ceremonies that displayed the pharaoh's wealth was, in a word, definitive:

> "Wealth from Egypt's empire in Nubia and Syro-Palestine helped finance these and other ideological, political, and socioeconomic activities. In particular, the foreign preciosities distributed at the rewards ceremony would have

> both reinforced the state's ideological message and served to cement patronage relationship between king and elites, and ultimately the broader society. Nubian gold also fueled Egyptian foreign relations in Western Asia. As noted above, Edzard (1960) argues that so much gold was exported during the New Kingdom that Kassite Babylon shifted from a silver to a gold standard. And Egypt had such a reputation as a source of gold that the disappointed Babylonian king could complain in one of his requests: *There is no gold! In Egypt gold is more plentiful than dust.*"[143]

How *wretched* could Kush have been, with so much gold that it was the envy of the ancient world? (Nubia's small population size, in comparison to Egypt's, put it at a military disadvantage at times and allowed the imperialists from the north to periodically gain territory.) Such tropes have been used consistently by imperialists facing the 'barbarians', both in antiquity and modernity, as a justification for their invasions: in the process, they are the ones who are committing the barbarous acts, thus their derogatory rhetoric about the 'other' becomes a mere projection of denial.

The insatiable greed of the Egyptians, for gold and expanding their territory, was mainly ideological although it had tremendous economic and political benefits for them. The often repeated cycle of trade morphing into invasion characterizes the relationship between Egypt in Nubia, from around the fourth

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[143] ibid., 186.

millennium BCE forward, although they both emerged from a forgotten, shared cultural tradition: how this has been characterized, by the mainstream of Egyptology, is certainly a distortion. Egyptologists have excelled at constructing separate, distinct identities based on "Race" to characterize this process; however the archaeological and written records do not conclusively support such an interpretation:

> "Emberling resists coming to the easy conclusion that it is impossible to discover ethnicity in the archaeological record, but argues instead, and I think correctly, that the differences might point towards negotiations in the construction of identities that reflect the flexibility of ethnicity and its openness to situational manipulations. In our case, material culture and cultural practice apparently supply strong ethnic markers for Egypt and Nubia, but a closer, contextual examination of the archaeological record at Askut and Tombos, aided by the juxtaposition of text and archaeology, reveals the underlying complexities and ambiguities that mark the nature of ethnic identity and the dynamism of frontier situations."[144]

Ethnicity and its Openness to Situational Manipulation

As cultures come into contact, and close proximity, the *adoption* of cultural behaviors and practices can accelerate, to the point where they may become indistinguishable, and later

[144] Ibid., 204.

misinterpreted. The notion of being able to isolate distinct groupings of ancient populations, in itself, is problematic, but it seems 'feasible' for the purposes of research. And indeed, scholars will be able to create distinct groupings of ancient populations, just as they have attempted to: but what is the rational basis of their criteria? If the contemporary writings are suspect, and the remains do not specifically identify their context and relationship with the individual, then how can we be certain?

The attention to *habitus* is probably double-edged, although there is some evidence that points to a concerted effort by both Nubians and Egyptians to maintain their customs within a colonial sphere. At the same time, the exchange under these conditions is remarkable, and apparently negotiated more so than coerced. What emerges is a hybridized cultural domain, in which features that may have been associated only with one population spreads beyond its inventors' intentions. (For example, a belief system like the *Negative Confessions,* which became the basis of the *Ten Commandments* that Moses was supposed to have received from God at Mount Sinai: how widespread is it today, and how can this *habitus* be used to identify it with a distinct population?) In the case of Nubia and Egypt:

> "The mixing in Lower Nubia of cultures from Upper Nubia was later accompanied by rapidly accelerating Egyptianization of many burials. Although many transitional elements can be cited from other sites, burials in which Egyptian customs were used in coherent ways soon appeared at Cemetery K at Adindan and elsewhere. We know that the Nubians did not disappear, but they did cross-trade cultural traits

> in Lower Nubia to the extent that it is often not possible to distinguish, see C-Group, Pan Grave, or Kerma burials in the cemeteries. Further, they adopted Egyptian objects and burial customs to such an extent that only minor features of the burials identify the burials as local. Clearly, by the time of Thutmose III's early years, most of the inhabitants of the valley in Lower Nubia, whatever their genetic background, had ceased to be identifiable C-Group or Pan Grave and now made use of material goods originating in the wider culture of the New Kingdom."[145]

Although cultures can remain in isolation for significant periods of time, once contact is made between them it is difficult to estimate what the outcomes will be. In the case of Nubia and Egypt however, the sacred bark originated in Nubia, spread to Egypt, was ideologically elaborated in significant ways, and returned to Nubia, brought by the inhabitants to the north. Therefore, what is it that we are actually witnessing here? Is it really the 'Egyptianization of Nubia'? Psychological anthropologists have argued that all human behavior is cultural, and it certainly embodies both environmental and contextual influences; this may account for the uncanny development of mutually unintelligible languages of populations, in close proximity: adaption is dynamic, not static and the only absolute is change. The Victorian and late modern Western colonial mentality, with its constant attempt to discretely classify

[145] Bruce Williams, *Excavations between Abu Simbel and the Sudan Frontier Part 5: C-Group, Pan Grave, and Kerma Remains at Adindan Cemeteries T, K, U, and J* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1983) 120.

everything, and everyone, has run afoul when it comes to the interpretation of ancient African civilization; but not to worry, for today's archaeologists are working diligently and correcting the mistakes of the past. Indeed, the 18th, 19th, and early 20th century scholars did the best that they could with the tools, methods, and context that they had to work with, and they made substantial contributions to the study of Nubia and Egypt that provide our point of departure.

The literature on Nubia and Egypt is permeated with references to the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, identified as the "Ethiopian Dynasty" by scholars. They assert that the "Black Pharaohs" conquered Egypt around 750 BCE led by *Piankhy*, although pharonic practice began in Nubia, and pharaohs with Nubian ancestry had been on the throne of Egypt since 2,000 BCE (*e.g.* Amenemhet I, and his descendents). In this way, the *Suppressed Qualifier* is used to make the Egyptians somehow "not Black" - although they are in Africa, and making the distinction of the Nubians pharaohs identifying them as "Black" - pharaohs.

So, if the Egyptians were in Africa, and they were 'not Black', then what were they? By not saying exactly what the weather, the suppressed qualifier is used to make them, by default, 'White'- because they are not 'Black'. The Egyptians certainly cannot be classified as 'Asiatics', because in all of their iconography literature, they are smiting Asiatics as their enemies. The Suppressed Qualifier is used mainly in the art-culture system, embodied in the *Aesthetic* (*see* Dr. Clyde R. Taylor's *The Mask of Art*), and there is no such thing as "White- art": there is no need to voice it; a standard art text may emphasize the paintings of *The Renaissance* and beyond (although they made

include 'some' paintings from the Middle Ages, but these are 'immature' in comparison to Michelangelo and his contemporaries). Thus, every other form of 'art' becomes inferior in the aesthetic, and it needs a 'qualifier' that is based on geography, "Race", gender, or 'ethnicity'. The characterization of Nubian pharaohs as "Black" and Egyptian pharaohs who were their neighbors in Africa as "not Black" surfaced from colonialists' racist expectations, which were not borne out by the archaeological and historical records: but that did not stop them, or even give them pause, because it was a foregone conclusion that the Egyptians had to civilize the "Black" Africans (as they had done), but, somehow, the "Black" Africans accidentally got the upper hand, for a short time… A case in point is that as a result of Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion, the French have been involved in the study of Nubia and Egypt for over two hundred years, and as Brett A. Berliner noted in *Ambivalent Desire*:

> "The popular image of blacks in France at the time was overwhelmingly negative. During and after the era of colonial conquest, from the 1880s until the Great War, the mass press wrote numerous sensational stories about savage black Africans; these stories were part of the diffuse campaign to justify and win popular support for conquests and the civilizing mission. In addition, late nineteenth-century anthropologists 'scientifically' determined that Africans were a primitive, if not atavistic, breed of mankind; and science and literature both typified blacks as dangerously sexualized. Finally, in advertisements, blacks were commodified as servile, comic, and physically grotesque. The

> prevailing stock of stereotypical representations of the black African did not make it propitious to hosts such 'savages' on metropolitan soil to fight the German 'barbarians'. But there is a fluidity to representations in popular culture: one stereotype becomes hegemonic and then another does, if only situationally. Thus it is during World War I that the French consciously constructed a new and soon dominant representation for Africans - or rather for those Africans enlisted in the service of civilization. In iconography, literature, and memory, the French rapidly came to accept the heroic tirailleur as a *grand enfant*, a big child, rather than as a fully realized man, in order to make sense of France's new unease during and after the Great War."[146]

Dr. George A. Reisner commenced his excavations in Nubia at this time (1913), and the French view was ubiquitous in the Western world, in which the archaeologists of that period had been acculturated. A recent example of this view that has been somewhat 'sanitized' in the face of political correctness was published in *The Nubian Pharaohs: Black Kings of the Nile.* Jean Leclant, *Honorary Professor, Collège de France, Perpetual Secretary, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* wrote:

> "The two admirable statues of Tanutamun are the first to reveal his facial features. Taharqa, who ruled in the first half of the seventh century BCE, was the powerful Kushite king who long resisted

[146] Brett A. Berliner, *Ambivalent Desire: The Exotic Black Other in Jazz-Age France* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002) 10.

> Assyrian invasion and thus merited mention in the Bible. Finally vanquished around 656 BCE, the 'Black pharaohs' were forced to abandon the lower Nile and withdraw to the south, thereafter reigning in Nubia as the Napatan Dynasty. Indeed these tough conquerors from the south, with their strong features and powerful bodies, combined Egyptian royal insignia with more specifically African attributes, notably invoking their ram-god, Amun, who became the dynastic god of the Egyptians."[147]

Thanks to Leclant's work, we are able to conclude that the previous pharaohs were not black, not strong, and they had weak features although they were in Africa too; but he is not finished, because he firmly places "Black" pharaohs in *The Aesthetic*:

> "The individual features and characteristics of monarchs, who have now taken their place in history, emerge in an expressive art that combines the rigor of revived classicism with a fantastically 'primal' aesthetic. Certainly many budding Egyptologists—and Africanologists—will be delighted to find here unexpectedly concrete evidence of negritude. We are thus a long way from the purely theoretical speculation that once animated fascinating conversations about Kushite civilization that I used to have

[147] Charles Bonnet and Dominique Valbelle, *The Nubian Pharaohs: Black Kings of the Nile* (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2006) 7-8.

> with President Léopold Senghor of Senegal, back when excavations in Sudan were just getting underway."[148]

Nubia, *Negritude*, and the Aesthetic

So, the "Black" pharaohs represent *revived classicism with a fascinatingly 'primal' aesthetic*? Leclant's imaginative concept, 'primal' aesthetic (Leclant used single quotes to emphasize primal), identifies what is arguably the second most active player in the misrepresentation of Nubia, in conjunction with the "Race" concept. Most people have never actually studied Aesthetics, and they have little or no idea of its origin. Aesthetics is 'classified' in the field of Philosophy, and people may assume that the ancient Greeks invented Aesthetics; however this is not the case. Johann Baumgarten invented *Aesthetics* in Germany, in 1735. Early Aestheticians like Immanuel Kant and David Hume purposely singled Africans out, excluding them from the aesthetic based on their presumed inferiority; Hume specifically asserted the "Negroes" were not civilized, had no arts, had no sciences, and no ingenious manufactures: Nubia and Egypt created an *Aesthetic* problem for Europeans, being located in Africa. The ancient Greek philosophers were immersed in African cultural products, making numerous expeditions there, and they probably would have found Hume's claims laughable.

The Black-Primitive dyad prevails, in what has been masquerading as 'objective research', even today. The insinuation remains that "Blacks" could not possibly have been

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[148] Ibid, 8.

'Civilized' or been responsible for the emergence of Nile Valley Civilization: that's because they are *Black*. Also, wherever *blackness* lurks, the primitive remains its inseparable companion... Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire were French colonial charges (from Senegal and Martinique, respectively) who went to Paris to study at the city's most prestigious universities, mingle with France's most distinguished politicians, and ultimately become *French*: their hopes were thwarted when they found that since they were "Black" they could never be "French" to the *French*, which forced them to adopt the only identity that was available to them: the *Nègre* (this is explained, in detail by Berliner).

Césaire and Senghor initially rejected "Black" culture and language, in lieu of French culture and language. Aspiring to be "Black Frenchman," Césaire and Senghor believed that upon completing their education at the most prestigious universities in Paris, they would become fully integrated into French society. However, there was a miscalculation: they never anticipated that they would be rejected by the French; that is, the French considered them to be inferior, colonial charges. Césaire and Senghor did not understand that it wasn't simply a matter of acquiring education and manners: the French saw them as "Blacks" who could never be true Frenchman. Since it is the group, in fact, that decides upon its members, Césaire and Senghor were relegated to the periphery of French society and culture, never being allowed full participation. It was at this point that they 'discovered' the 'beauty' of 'blackness', and not before. That's the only reason that Senghor and Césaire espoused *Negritude* (not before they were rejected by the French), because "Whiteness" was not possible, for them, no matter *who* they

knew in France (Senghor was a classmate of François Mitterrand, President of France from 1981-95), or what they did.

Loathing and self-loathing were combined, in the minds of Europeans and colonial Africans, and this prevailing attitude has never really seen much abatement. Since scholars do not exist apart from their social environment, their learned behaviors inherently provide the paradigm from which they operate. In this way, the perspective from which the study of Nubia and Egypt has been viewed was skewed toward the voluminous, stereotypical imagery of colonialism; this perspective of Nubia and its people must be examined critically.

CHAPTER 5

PERSPECTIVE, OBJECTIVITY, AND THE REPRESENTATION OF NUBIA

Egyptologists often mention Nubia as they conduct their studies of Egypt, and by examining what they wrote, as we see in the case of Jean Leclant, their view of Nubia is tinged with a conscious, or unconscious, racist, derogatory tone, as well as seeming amazement that "Blacks" ever had a *Civilization* at all.

Colonialists appear to be disturbed by the idea of an African civilization (they removed Egypt from Africa and put it in the Middle East, which solved that problem), probably due to their activities during the Atlantic Slave Trade. Therefore, it would seem more understandable for eighteenth-century, nineteenth-century, and early twentieth- century scholars to have these unconscious tropes in their analyses, but how can we account for late twentieth-century and twenty-first century scholars toeing the line? Scholars use the work of their predecessor incessantly, for good or ill, and errors can be reproduced in 'the literature' for centuries: there is an underlying assumption that if something has been written and published by the famous or popular, it must have merit. Nubia is mentioned in Jon E. Lewis's *The Expedition of Snefru to Nubia and Lebanon, c. 2613-2589 BC* and the *translation* is an obvious product of modern racism, not from antiquity:

> "As recorded on the Palermo Stone, Snefrer was the founder of the 4th Dynasty. Raiding negro Nubia, south of Aswan, was almost a ritual

pharonic occupation, until the region was eventually colonized; slaves were not the least by-product of these sorties. The cedar wood mentioned, to be used for temple doors, came from the Lebanon. According to the scribe, all the events below happened in one busy year of Snefru's reign. *Building of 100-cubit dewatowe-ships of meru wood, and of 60 sixteen barges of the king. Hacking up the land of the Negro. Bringing of 7,000 living prisoners, and 200,000 large and small cattle. Building of the wall of the Southland and Northland called houses of Snefru. Building of 40 ships filled (with) cedar wood.*"[149]

"Race" and the Study of Nubia

There were no "negroes' in antiquity; the term (and concept) entered our lexicon from Spanish, which didn't exist during the reign of Snefru, so the translation couldn't possibly be accurate; however, you will see this example repeated over and over, in the literature's references to Nubians. In Lost Land Emerging, Walter B. Emery (Edwards Professor of Egyptology, University of London), who is one of the most respected scholars regarding the study of Nubia asserted that "As far as can be ascertained on the available archaeological evidence, the peoples of Wawat and Kush, although related, were racially distinct. This evidence suggests that the inhabitants of Wawat were generally unwarlike people while the people of Kush were

[149] Jon E. Lewis, Editor, *The Mammoth Book of Eyewitness Ancient Egypt* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003) 8.

of fighting stock, who when Egyptian colonial rule was firmly established in Nubia were usually recruited for service in the pharonic armies of the Empire."150 Emory notes that there have been numerous invasions in Nubia, however he contends that there was "considerable racial mixture" but still, Nubians and Egyptian remained separate races:

> "As in ancient times, the Nubian of today is racially distinct from the Egyptian, and although a large proportion of the male population live a great part of their lives in Egypt, they remain to a large extent a race apart. Very rarely do they marry Egyptians; home, wife, and family remain in Nubia, which even in its present state, with its beauty largely destroyed by the construction of the Aswan Dam, remains for them the most desirable land in the world. To it they will invariably return at every available opportunity, and in the event of sickness or the onset of old age their one ambition is to get back to the land that gave them birth."151

Emery applauds Nubians for their work ethic, and their insatiable desire to return to their homeland, although they may travel abroad: it is a warm, patronizing characterization that absolves the colonialist of guilt, for the fact that they were the invaders who displaced Nubians in the first place; however, Emery could not resist adding very laudatory characterizations of Nubians' servile skills, an obvious vestige of antiquity:

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[150] Walter B. Emery, *Lost Land Emerging* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967) 4.

[151] Ibid., 6.

> "For generations the Nubians have earned their livelihood as domestic servants or as sailors of the Upper Egyptian Nile, in both of which professions I think they may be considered masters. All of the best butlers and cooks in Egypt are from Nubia, and certainly the most reliable janitors of Cairo's great apartment houses, offices, and hotels almost invariably come from somewhere south of Aswan."[152]

Emery describes the "Black Noba" as "the barbarian tribes" in Nubia, based mainly on accounts from the ancient Greek invaders Strabo and Eratosthenes, who were in the business of robbing Nubia of its treasures and people, since the times of Alexander the Great from Macedonia in the 4th century BCE, and the Romans:

> "As we shall see, during the period between the third and sixth centuries A.D., when the X-Group culture flourished, Nubia was occupied by two distinct nationalities, Blemyes and Nobatae, and although most authorities believe that the X-Group are to be identified with the Nobatae, I consider, on purely archaeological evidence, that this culture belonged to their opponents whom the Romans called Blemyes. The Meroitic empire comprised many subject peoples, and Strabo mentions that among these were the Blemyes. Gradually, the Blemyes appeared to have occupied the whole of Nubia, and although

[152] Ibid., 7.

> perhaps still subject to Meroe, were by the middle of the third century strong enough to attack the Roman frontier during the reign of Decius, and although they were driven back, no punitive measures appear to have been taken against them. It was at this time that Meroe had its last contact with Rome, for A.D. 253 an embassy led by one Pasmun, son of Paese, was sent by the Meroitic king Teremen to Trebonius Gallus, with gifts to the temple of Isis at Philae. It has been suggested that the main purpose of this embassy was to appeal for aid against the barbarian tribes of the Black Noba, who were threatening Meroe itself, and who were ultimately to cause its downfall."[153]

Although the Noba are in their homeland, in Nubia, they become "barbarians" to Emery and responsible for destroying civilization, not building it. In this way, 'Blackness' is associated with barbarism and destruction once more, and "Race" factors into the interpretation of Nubia's past, making the point that the Noba could not possibly have been contributors to ancient African civilization. The modern concept of "Race" was applied to ancient Egyptian paintings in the analysis of Pierre Montet, under his heading *The Races of Man*; this practice became one of the pillars of Egyptologists' interpretation of the relationship between Nubia and Egypt, ignoring the fact that Nubians were the original pharaohs:

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[153] ibid., 294-295.

> "At the dawn of her history, Egypt's population in the Nile valley was extremely mixed, and it remained so later. However diverse their origins may have been, Egyptians of the classical period were conscious of themselves as a nation. In several royal tombs of the New Kingdom - the best known example is in the tomb of Seti I - there is a picture showing representatives of four races. First, the remtu, the Egyptians themselves, recognizable by their round heads, their short square beards, and their scanty loin-cloths. Besides them are the Asiatics, the Amu, clad in woolen loin-cloths decorated with acorns. With their aquiline profiles, very different from the Egyptian profile, bushy beards and abundant hair, they bear a close resemblance to the people of Ta-meh, who were subjugated by Narmer. Then there are the Nehesui who lived in the south of Egypt. They had all the characteristics of the black-skinned people, flat faces, and woolly hair. They wore a long loin-cloth and wound bands of cloth around their bodies."[154]

Truly, it *is* convenient to simply lump people into a "Race" during antiquity to explain their relationship, but from everything that the archaeological record has presented, it was never quite that easy (although that is what Egyptologists have been doing). The so-called "characteristics of the black-skinned people" are "flat faces and woolly hair?" Really, do all of them have that? If so, it would be a *phenotypical first*! Clearly, the painting from

[154] Pierre Montet, *Eternal Egypt* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000) 20-21.

Seti I's tomb, like others from antiquity, are symbolic, not absolute. Even the way that the Egyptians represented themselves (self-reported) could not have been accurate, because all of the men were red (Desher), and all of the women were yellow (Ketj): skin color does not cluster along gender lines. Under his *Human types* heading, Montet contends that:

> "The men were on the whole rather tall, although never exceptionally so. They had broad, strong shoulders, a firm flat belly, and well-developed limbs. They had clearly defined features, prominent eyes, usually large, almost flat, noses, thickish lips and somewhat low foreheads. Such were without exception the kings of Egypt at the time of the Old Kingdom. Many individuals presented the same features - for instance-Ranefer, who lived during the Fifth Dynasty, and of whom there are two statues in the Cairo Museum. This resolute-looking man represents the perfect aristocratic type, a true *iry-patu*."[155]

A Eurasian Origin of Nefertiti?

Montet has an explanation for an apparently "Nubian" representation that *seems* to be out of place, in an ancient Egyptian Fourth Dynasty tomb: it was found in a royal context, and he turned the person into a 'Negro', over 4,000 years after it was buried: "The Nile brought several southern types to Egypt. A head, which is not the original but a replacement, and which was found, like the other works referred to, in a Fourth Dynasty

[155] Ibid., 25-26.

tomb, is undoubtedly negroid in type. The kings and rich Egyptians were fond of dwarfs, whom they brought in from the Upper Nile areas. They were gifted dancers and were employed as entertainers, as well as being given the task of looking after the monkeys."[156] This echoes Emery's servile expectations of Nubians, which is applied to both antiquity and the present: the salient feature is the Nubians' "Race" which is correlated with their abilities, or the lack thereof.

The Nubian Origin of Queen Tiy

However, Montet does later point out a Nubian in a royal context, citing "the canopic jars found in a tomb said to be that of Queen Tiy. The kings of the New Kingdom often married princesses from far-off lands. The exquisite Nefertiti is of pure Eurasian stock, while Queen Tiy, the daughter of two well-known Thebans, is a perfect example of Nubian beauty."[157] *Pure Eurasian stock?* Empirically speaking, there is no such thing a *pure Eurasian stock*... There is no archaeological or historical evidence that places Nefertiti in Eurasia, or indicates that she *came* to Egypt *from* anywhere! Simply on the basis of racism, Montet has taken the liberty of outrunning the evidence on Nefertiti, and making her somehow *not* African: a woman that beautiful, based on his expectations, could not be *African*. Here, Montet's well-distributed publication takes an African woman out of a royal Egyptian context, and replaces her with a *hypothetical Eurasian* woman, which is more to his liking. Montet's estimation of Nubians is not unusual, in Egyptology;

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[156] ibid., 27.

[157] ibid., 29.

he assumes that Egypt is *not* in Africa, and that "negroids" are merely servile and peripheral to Egyptian civilization; even when he does mention Queen Tiy, she is an example of "Nubian beauty" not beauty, in general. So, do *Nubians* have a different kind of beauty, than everyone else in ancient Africa? *In The Aesthetic*, Queen Tiy would not be included among the beautiful, anyway, due to her Nubian ancestry. However, Stanley Burnstein asserts that:

> "The attitudes of early historians of Kush, influenced by the fashionable racism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the Egyptian denigration of their Kushite neighbors, tended to be negative. In their view Kush was an outpost of superior Egyptian civilization isolated in a hostile and uncreative African environment and condemned, therefore, to slow degeneration. Its positive role in history was limited to diffusing throughout the rest of Africa cultural innovations borrowed from Egypt such as divine kingship and iron metallurgy. Evaluations by contemporary historians are more positive, emphasizing the Kushites' deliberate selections of Egyptian elements and creative use of them to express local values and realities."[158]

[158] Stanley Burstein, Editor, *Ancient African Civilizations: Kush and Axum* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2000) 12-13.

The Semantic Confusion Surrounding *Nubia*

Today we know that divine kingship first appeared in Nubia, not Egypt, so Egyptologists will have to rewrite their claims, of African diving kinship origination in Egypt. Unfortunately, Burstein also states that "Gold, the Flesh of the Gods, as the Egyptians called it, has always been one of the most sought after products of Nubia. Nubian gold made New Kingdom Egypt the wealthiest state in the Ancient Near East."[159] Burstein is Geographically Challenged, because Egypt is in Africa, not the Ancient Near East (Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia, *etc.*). It is extremely misleading to claim that Egypt is in the Ancient Near East, as opposed to Africa: and why would anyone claim such a thing anyway, with so many maps available? This effort to expunge Egypt from Africa is persistent, because people from Africa automatically evoke a connotation of "Black" and Egyptologists certainly do not want to classify the Egyptians as "Black" under any circumstances! That epithet is reserved for "Nubians" and the Egyptians are 'something else', not "Black" not "White" but relegated to a *nebulous realm of their own.* We're back to Flinders Petrie's trope, the so-called *Dynastic Race.* Where did they come from? Are they extraterrestrials? *Part* human? Not human? Every conceivable form of misdirection has been employed to separate Nubians from Egyptians, and make the "Blackness" associated with Nubians the salient factor for analysis of the culture area. Well-intentioned scholars persist in emphasizing the "Blackness" of Nubians, although the geographic locale of 'Nubia' is subjective, depending on who you ask and when you asked them (antiquity or modernity). As David Roberts asked: "Why

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[159] Ibid., 31.

is it, then, that most of us today have barely heard of Nubia? One reason is semantic. Over millennia, Nubia was known under many different names. To the Egyptians, it was Ta-Seti or Yam, or Wawat. Later it appears as Meroe. The Greeks and Romans called in Aethiopia (today's Ethiopia being Abyssinia to them). In the Bible it appears as Kush."[160] Roberts goes on to emphasize the "Race" of the Nubians, which some Afrocentrists may find flattering, but it denies the African context of Nubians and Egyptians, simplifying things by using "Race" to explain their 'differences':

> "Another reason has to do with prejudice. Nubia has always been exceedingly remote and difficult to access. From its Christianization in the 6th century A.D. all the way down to the 19th, the kingdom vanished from the European record: only the glowing reports of the classical authors kept its memory alive. This neglect had everything to do with race—for Nubia had been an African empire, and a black African one at that. Even the Greeks perpetuated the prejudice. An early biographer of Alexander the Great records the queen of Nubia responding to an inquisitive letter from the youthful conqueror in the following words: *Do not despise us for the color of our skin. In our souls we are brighter than the whitest of your people.*"[161]

[160] David Roberts, Out of Africa: the superb artwork of ancient Nubia (*The Smithsonian*, June 1993) 91.

[161] Ibid.

The Father of *Nubiology*

Roberts also points out the damage to our understanding of Nubia and Egypt that was done by the *Father of Nubiology* Dr. George A. Reisner, who desperately wanted the pharaohs to be light-skinned; so, he made them light-skinned, and others have followed suit. The El Kurru cemeteries of Nubia contained outstanding artifacts, evidence of a highly developed technocomplex, and it was located far from Cairo, between the Fourth Cataract and Fifth Cataract:

> "The first archaeologists to document the glory that was Nubia succumbed to a kindred bias. Even as he dug the remarkable royals cemeteries of El Kurru below the Fourth Cataract, George A. Reisner, working for Harvard University and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, concluded that the rulers whose tombs he unearthed must have been an offshoot of a Libyan dynasty (thus light-skinned), pharaohs. For decades, everything Nubian was regarded as derived from the Egyptian, hence 'decadent' and 'peripheral'. So strong was the lingering condescension toward Nubia as a kind of second-rate Egypt, that as late as 1960 only one American scholar—Dows Dunham, Reisner's protégé and successor at the MFA—was working on Nubian studies."[162]

Reisner was working in uncharted territory, and he created a number of 'temporary names' for sites and populations: but those temporary names hardened in the

[162] ibid., 92-93.

interpretation Nubia, and they are still with us today: A-Group, C-Group, and X-Group, all of which seem ephemeral, in comparison to the names of other groups in antiquity. Probably, no harm was intended, but a 'shadowy' identity emerges from these linguistic appendages. Roberts states "The domain of the blacks in Lower Nubia was known in Egypt as Ta-Seti—the "Land of the Bow"[163] which sounds like modern segregation: *the Blacks?* Some Egyptologists make the racist differentiation of Nubians and Egyptians more subtle; although both presumed distinct groups are in Africa, the Nubians become *African* and *Egypt* is somehow *not African*:

> "So by around 750 BC, Thebes still owed allegiance to the Twenty-third Dynasty in the north. At around this date, however, a new power came on the scene, that of the Upper Nubian kingdom of Napata, which had its base at the city of that name in the region of the Fourth Cataract. This African kingdom, which used many Egyptian iconographical and architectural forms, began to extend its influence northward, and Kashta was the first of its kings to be attested in the south of Egypt, around 750 BC. We term them the Twenty-Fifth or Nubian Dynasty."[164]

Deconstructing this text, the question becomes: was Egypt an African kingdom? Why or why not, since it was in Africa? Why is the Napatan kingdom referred to as African, and the Egyptian kingdom is not referred to, or identified, as

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[163] ibid., 93.

[164] Nigel and Helen Strudwick, *Thebes in Egypt: A Guide to the Tombs and Temples of Ancient Luxor* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1999) 40.

African? This type of subtle racism is ubiquitous in Egyptology, and it certainly reflects interpretational bias (as David Roberts pointed out). Evidence is supposed to guide the researcher, not his/her preconceived notions that are, essentially, memory tapes being played back: nothing new is being learned, as a result, but it's comfortable.

The Twenty-fifth Dynasty is sorely represented, and it probably creates a great deal of cognitive dissonance. The term "Ethiopian" dynasty has been applied to it for decades, although it had nothing to do with Ethiopians; it is a Greek term that is translated as 'sun-baked people'.

Phenotype in the Nile Valley

Paying attention to phenotypes in a population is one thing, but it is a stretch to surmise their capabilities, or the lack thereof, based on a phenotype; this is what constantly perverts the coherent understanding of ancient African civilization. What does a phenotype actually tell you, and can it tell you anything at all about civilization? It has been used excessively for an explanation of Nubia and Egypt, that is, shifting power relations, based on 'Race'. As the aforementioned evidence from the emerging archaeological record demonstrates, the irrational dismemberment of ancient African populations is no longer tenable. There is even a reference to the "Kushite Fold" that supposedly verifies the "Nubian heritage" of Amenirdas:

> "At that time of the Kushite invasion, Shepenwepet I, daughter of the Twenty-Second Dynasty King Osorkon III, reigned as god's wife of Amen in Thebes. She was compelled to adopt

> Amenirdas, a daughter of Kashta, as her successor to the office of god's wife. Sculpture of the Kushite period tends to be more truly portrait-like than statuary from earlier periods in Egypt. Amenirdas' Nubian heritage is evident in her slightly broadened facial features and in the elegant bone structure of her face. The statute exhibits the 'Kushite fold', a curving line that extends from the nostrils to the corner of the mouth, emphasizing the fleshy pad that forms the cheek."[165]

This *stunning* account and description of a Kushite princess's statue appears in a book that Hudson Hills Press, New York published "in association with" the "Cincinnati Art Museum" in 1996. Here, the authors are looking for, and finding, a distinguishable "Race" feature that is supposed to characterize Nubian statuary, and differentiate it from Egyptian statuary (somehow inferior in quality; degenerate). But is this actually the case? The statue of Sobek-Nakht from the 13th Dynasty era has virtually the same facial features, and expression, in the same book; however the authors do not mention a "Kushite fold" although the timeframe corresponds with the Second Intermediate Period. This practice subtly denies the existence, and participation, of Nubia in pharonic Egypt, although we know that Nubians have always been interwoven at all levels.

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[165] Anne K. Capel and Glenn E. Markoe, Editors, *Mistress of the House Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, Inc., 1996) 115-116.

In reality, the Egyptians were obsessed with getting into *Wretched Kush*, because that was where the wealth laid, the luxury goods that they ceaselessly craved:

> "From the beginning of ancient Egyptian history, the Kings had been anxious to exploit Nubia in order to obtain the exotic luxuries it could supply. The expeditions they ordered for this purpose are described in the tomb inscriptions of Upper Egyptian officials and others who were responsible for organizing such missions. Some tell of the hazards of their trips, Sabni, the governor of the South, writes that his father Mekhu was killed undertaking an expedition. Sabni set off in hot pursuit and managed to recover his father's body and bring it home for burial in Egypt. When the king heard about it he congratulated Sabni on his prompt action and provided the embalming materials for the burial of Mekhu."[166]

Harkhuf's missions to get resources from Nubia date back to the Old Kingdom, and they were well-recorded; three missions into Nubia were recorded for him, and he had been groomed as a scout by his father. Harkhuf noted "I did it in seven months, I brought from it all kinds of beautiful and rare gifts and was praised for it very greatly."[167] The Egyptians did not encounter compliant Nubians on these expeditions, and it

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[166] Lorna Oakes and Lucia Gahlin, *Ancient Egypt: An illustrated reference to the mythos, religions, pyramids and temples of the land of the pharaohs* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2003) 216.

[167] Ibid.

was by no means a given that a foray into Nubia would be safe. Rather, these contacts were *negotiated* over the millennia, with a variety of outcomes. "A second expedition was equally successful, but Harkhuf experienced some difficulty on his third mission. The local chiefs put up some resistance until he won the support of the Chief of Yam. Then he was able to come home triumphant with *three hundred donkey loads of incense, ebony, [precious] oils, panthers skins, elephant tusks, throw sticks, and all good products*."[168]

The Inscriptions of King Senusret III

The Nile was treacherous at the First Cataract, so sailing south was an obstacle that was overcome by the building of canals to Nubia, and "Two of the inscriptions are of the Twelfth Dynasty King Senusret III (c.1874-c.1855 BC), and record his instructions for the digging of a canal as well as his conquest of Nubia. Later Kings found the canal blocked and had to redo the work."[169] The Nubians had blocked the canal with stones, and it took the pharaoh's order to clear the canal. The son of Thutmosis I (c.1594-1492 BC), named Thure, wrote an inscription that states "*Year 3, first month of the third season, day 22. His Majesty sailed this canal in victory and in the power of his return from overthrowing Wretched Kush.*" From this we get the oft-repeated epithet of the Egyptians, *Wretched Kush,* which is definitely a misrepresentation, if that was where all of the luxury goods were found.

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[168] ibid.

[169] ibid., 217.

Under these circumstances, it is inaccurate to assume that Nubia was 'there for the taking' for Egyptians, which is explained in part the convoluted relationship that they had, from the 4th millennium onward. There was more of an ebb and flow between Nubia and Egypt, one conquering the other from time to time (but not exactly absolutely, at any time). With their shared origin, it is understandable how the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty was able to resemble the Egypt with which they had been in contact, for time immemorial: they were neighbors, partners, and often family: these connections are inseparable. Regardless of their close relationship, and family ties, Dr. Zahi Hawass dismisses the Nubians in Egypt as mere 'ephemeral' foreigners who didn't last long:

> "In the late 700s BC, Egypt was conquered by a foreign power, the Kushite dynasty, from Nubia, and for the first time in its history, became part of someone else's empire. Several decades later, the Assyrian empire rising to the north invaded Egypt twice, sacked Thebes, and drove the Nubians back to their homeland. The Assyrians were supported by a native dynasty, presumed to be of Libyan origin, based in the delta. Psammetik I (664 BC to 610 BC) soon claimed independence from the overextended Assyrians and reunited the country under the banner of the Saite 26th dynasty."[170]

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[170] Zahi Hawass, *Hidden Treasures of Ancient Egypt: Unearthing the Masterpieces of Egyptian History* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2004) 72.

This was not exactly the first time in history that Egypt had been conquered, because there were three Intermediate Periods before the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty's ascendency: "During the Second Intermediate Period (c.1750-1650 BC) centralized power in Egypt was broken by the rise to power of the Hyksos in the delta. The rulers of Kerma took advantage of the situation, entered into diplomatic relations with the Hyksos, and proceeded to occupy the Egyptian Second Cataract fortresses and to expand their power well to the north."[171] The presumption of ubiquitous Egyptian power in Nubia is quite overrated in many cases since:

> "As at the end of the Middle Kingdom, it was the weakness as of Egypt at the end of the New Kingdom (after 1086 BC) which resulted in the loss of control over the lands to the south of the First Cataract. This may have been a very gradual process, of which we know few details. How much the indigenous inhabitants of the regions were able to contribute to the expulsion of the Egyptians is equally unclear. One of the major Egyptian cult centers at Napata fell into ruin and we may legitimately doubt whether any survivals of the Egyptian colonial period remained by the ninth century BC throughout much of Nubia."[172]

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[171] Derek A. Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998) 12.

[172] Ibid., 12-13.

Reisner's Emphasis on Separating Nubia from Egypt

Would Egyptians have accepted Nubian pharaohs, if they considered them to be foreigners, as their rulers? The fact that they did so in antiquity, while modern scholars like Dr. George A. Reisner (he claimed that the rulers of Kush came from Libya, which is absurd) focused their energies and interpretations on the separation of Nubians from Egyptians, exemplifies how preconceived notions can distort the African past. The melding of these neighboring populations' customs and practices took thousands of years, which is more than any other civilization has ever had: it is incomparable. Expecting a dynamic culture area like the Nile Valley to remain static over thousands of years is irrational, and:

> "The Kushite kings in Egypt were 'Lords of the Two Lands' and the buildings, activities and adoration of the Egyptian gods followed the established practices. They sought to integrate rather than to change, although their predilection for archaizing forms of art and expression is worthy of note. There is nothing that is distinctly Kushite about their architecture of their monuments, and posterity—by according them the title of the XXVth Dynasty—reflects their success at being accepted amongst the rightful rulers of Egypt. The effects of the control of Egypt on the Kushites must have been substantial, although it would appear that the rulers were already imbued with a considerable amount of Egyptian culture and they entered Egypt not as conquering barbarians but as

> champions of the age-old traditions of the Pharaohs. It is, therefore, not easy to assess the impact of the Egyptian adventure on Kushite civilization."[173]

When the Kushites held sway in Nubia and Egypt, their territorial boundaries exceeded the size of their predecessors', until invasions from neighboring populations reduced its size. "From the ninth year of the reign of Tanwettamani (c.655 BC), when the Kushites finally lost control of Egypt, to the fourth century AD when Kush as an independent political entity came to an end,"[174] a power shift in African civilization took place, never to be reversed.

Pharaohs and Queens of the First Millennium B.C.E.

Piankhy (Piye) may have been the conqueror of Egypt around 740-750 BCE, and archaeologists have been able to identify the reigns of the pharaohs *Tanwetamani, Taharqo, Aspelta, Arkamani, Amanirenas, Akinidad, Talakhamani, Irike-Amanote, Analmani, Senkamanisken, Harsiyotef, Shabaqo*, and *Tqrrmn (Teqerideamani).* "The reign of Taharqo is the only one where we can be certain both of its starting date and its duration. He ascended the throne in 690 BC and ruled for twenty-six years. Tanwetamani succeeded Taharqo and was certainly on the throne for a minimum of nine years."[175]

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[173] ibid., 17-19.

[174] ibid., 19.

[175] ibid., 20.

The Kushite throne was shared by men and women alike, and "the equal status of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitore is indicated by her regalia, by the activities she is shown performing and, most graphically, in the crowning ceremony."[176] Queens Shanadakhete and Amanishakheto ruled on their own, based on the iconographic inscriptions of their time. The kings wore crowns with the double *uraeus* which signified the uniting of the two lands (Nubia and Egypt), which is comparable to what the Egyptian kings did: both populations envisioned that the lands should be unified, albeit by dubious means (imperialism). In this way, they seemed to be inextricably linked, through shared symbolism, since prehistoric times; pharonic practice had come full circle, returning to its origins in Nubia with enhancements that had been contributed by their neighbors to the north. Indeed, *Writing*, which the Egyptians invented at Abydos, delivered the world from illiteracy: they wrote in Africa first. According to Welsby, though, the Kushites amount to a "Race" of "Negroids" making the dismemberment of Nubians and Egyptians, in a word, 'clear':

> "A large proportion of the individuals depicted as members of the ruling house and a number of their representations are certainly idealized to a greater or lesser extent. What is clear is that many had markedly negroid features and dark skins. Diodorus describes the majority of the 'Ethiopians', particularly those living along Nile, as being black in colour, with flat noses and woolly hair. By the later Kushite period

[176] Ibid., 25.

> corpulence among women was obviously a mark of earthly distinction and royal ladies were of considerable size. Goddesses, on the other hand, retained their slim figures. A limited number of paleopathological and physical anthropological studies have been undertaken on Kushite human remains. We thus have a little data on their general physical well-being and on their life expectancy."

Without paleopathological and physical anthropological studies of Kushite human remains, how can Welsby be so certain that the representations are idealized? Again, it is a foregone conclusion that all Kushites were "Negroid" and the "Race" paradigm is used to explain the interaction (or the lack thereof) between Nubia and Egypt, with "Race" making their separation *obvious*.

Archaeological Evidence Versus Assumptions

Here, a modern ideology, applied out of its intended context (and it was proven untenable even there), undermines any probability of a lucid interpretation, especially since: "By the later eighth century BC the Kings of Kush had assumed the titles of the Pharaoh of Egypt, 'King of Upper and Lower Egypt', and ruled territory stretching from the borders of Palestine to Central Sudan."[177] This should be the focus of those who claim to be studying ancient African civilization, not dismembering the people into "Races" as they insist on doing, as though it is somehow definitive. Europeans are

[177] ibid., 57.

unable to resist imposing their "Race" ideology on Africans, and ideology which automatically makes "Negroids" inferior, and therefore, their existence and accomplishments inferior. This is no Freudian Slip that Europeans engage in, or on the other hand, maybe it is. There are 'expectations' that go with the "Negroid" designation, and they are well known. The "Negroid" classification automatically proves that "Negroids" could not possibly have been responsible for the fabulous civilization known as *Egypt*: even though they were there, they were mere bystanders to the greatness of the Egyptians. The archaeological evidence differs with this assumption, and "Whites" do not want to be proven wrong, regarding what they have claimed about the abilities of "Negroids" and "Negroes" for centuries. For Europeans to enter Africa, and interpret its history in terms of "Race" is, as Dr. Clyde R. Taylor states in *The Mask of Art,* "violence." This distortion of Nubians is all too common, in Egyptology.

The eighth century BCE was not the first time that Egypt had pharaohs with Nubian ancestry, however Egyptologists are thoroughly invested in ignoring, or denying, this fact, because it is not what they want; rather, they crave clearly demarcated dividing lines, based on "Race" from which they can create facts. But all is not lost, because a new wave of archaeologists have made great strides in refuting the racist interpretations of Nubia, thus the difficult *unlearning* process can begin, in earnest. But even the best archaeological expeditions, like those of the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute, use the "Race" paradigms of the past: "Remarks on human remains are confined to age and sex. The notes of the expedition's physical anthropologist, Duane Burnor, for each skeleton's racial characteristics will be included in an appendix to the last

volume of the series. The reader should know that no physical anthropologist was available for the 1962/1963 season, and age and sex were judged by the expedition members (T1-T12)."[178] "Race" is a failed scientific system, but it continues to be used by 'scientists'. Probably, they will never get over it, since the system has been imposed so thoroughly, worldwide; it has proven to be extremely dangerous too, if you take into account that Adolf Hitler's "Race" paranoia was the root cause of over 50 million deaths, during World War II alone. Can Africans, ancient and modern, ever be liberated from the incessant imposition of "Race" by Europeans, and become fully human? The shared experience of Nile Valley Civilization's population, over the past 10,000 years since sedentary living emerged, is far more complex than what "racial" classifications can explain.

Classifying Nubians as "Negroids" is not an idle trope; "Race" is a hierarchical scheme, with "White" at the top and "Negroid" at the bottom of human "Races" according to the well-known scheme.

The scheme has been internalized by the world's populations to the point where it is actually unconscious. That is, even if a person does not 'consciously' think in the hierarchical terms, they do so unconsciously. An automatic perceptive response, based on *prescriptive imagery* and *descriptive imagery* emerges, as a result of the numerous stereotypes with which people have been bombarded all of their life. Nubians, and their accomplishments, are inherently trivialized, and the

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[178] Bruce Beyer Williams, *Excavations Between Abu Simbel and the Sudan Frontier: C-Group, Pan Grave, and Kerma Remains at Adindan Cemeteries T,K,U, and J* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Oriental Institute, 1983) xxiii.

prevalent stereotypes of "Negroids" are unconsciously applied to them although no such category existed in antiquity; neither did the modern stereotypes of "Negroids". There appears to be a high level of denial in Egyptology, regarding the existence of Nubians on the throne of Egypt 4,000 years ago; it is well known by any Egyptologist worth their salt that Amenemhet I had a Nubian mother, Nefret, who was from a high-ranking family at Elephantine. Egyptians emphasized their matrilineal lineage, often referring to the pharaoh as the son of his mother (*e.g.* Amenemhet I, Son of the woman Nefret), possibly due to the uncertainty of paternity. Yet, this fact has been ignored, and Egyptologists claim that they can separate the Egyptians and Nubians into 'Races', which is absurd:

> "Ancient Egyptian women in general were able to exert a certain amount of influence outside the domestic sphere. This is largely due to the fact that all land and property was passed down through the female line from mother to daughter. The reason for such a rule seems to have been based on the assumption that one can be certain only of who one's mother is—maternity is a matter of fact, paternity is a matter of opinion! Thus, an ancient Egyptian man usually described himself by giving his mother's name rather than his father's, as in: Ahmose, son of (the woman) Abana; Baba, son of (the woman) Reonet. A belief in matrilineal descent is also found in other cultures—Jews, for example, owe their Jewishness to their mothers, not their fathers. The rule seems to have been fairly strictly adhered to, and nowhere more so than in the

royal family. The ideal way in which a king inherited the throne was by marriage to the royal heiress, the eldest daughter of the queen; because of this, some of them married every royal heiress regardless of consanguinity."[179]

Ancient Marital Practices

Today, many people cringe at the idea of marrying their sister or brother, which is totally understandable; but today we do not think as the ancients did. A woman had a different meaning in ancient Egypt, and "The tradition of the royal heiress also explains why, although Egyptian kings were pleased to accept foreign princesses and wives, Egyptian princesses were not sent to make marriages abroad—even the most tenuous claim to being a royal heiress must not be allowed to enable a foreign ruler to make a claim to the Egyptian throne."[180] This offers proof that Nubians were thoroughly integrated into Egyptian pharonic practice and society as a whole, not marginalized spectators as they are portrayed by Egyptologists who have been using "Race" as a defining characteristic: it had no relevance in ancient Egypt, since Senwosret I married Nefret, their descendents legitimately assumed the Egyptian throne, and they were of both Nubian and Egyptian ancestry. To disregard this is, indeed, either a *Lack of Candor* (this means that you *know* something, but withhold it when asked about it: you didn't *say* that you didn't know, but

[179] Barbara Watterson, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Trupp-Stroud: Gloucestershire, Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1991) 23.

[180] Ibid., 23-34.

you didn't admit that you did either, withholding the truth), or a blatant attempt to denigrate the role that Nubians played, in Nile Valley Civilization.

Regardless, the references to Nubians in the Egyptology literature, when they are mentioned, are tinged with the freight of modern "Race" ideology, which is erroneous; this augers for a paradigm shift in our understanding of Nubia and Egypt in antiquity, and some of the recent excavations and publications of archaeologists that have been cited in this book are providing just that. The only thing that is wrong with characterizing Nubians as *Negroids* is that it's wrong.

CHAPTER 6

RECAPITULATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF NUBIA

The *primitive* trope that is so generously applied to Africans, supposedly the epitome of savagery according to European accounts, becomes untenable when Nile Valley Civilization is *put under the microscope*. On the contrary, we find one of the earliest world civilizations, the origin of *Writing*, monumental architecture on a scale that has never been surpassed or thoroughly understood, a belief system that provided the foundation of today's monotheistic religions, and advanced mathematics learned there by the Greek, Pythagoras, which eventually transformed the Western world. It is only from the archaeological evidence that the role of Nubia, in the development of Egypt, can be ascertained with any degree of reliability.

Africans and the Western Primitive Trope

The *Aesthetic* excluded African cultural products, while somehow integrating the Egyptians and removing them from Africa, which is geographically curious. 'Scholars' even made the Egyptians "Afro-Asiatics" or even "Afrasan" in order to tie them to the Middle East, somehow, although ancient Egyptian language is a linguistic isolate with no related languages (there is a trace of ancient Egyptian language in Coptic liturgy today,

but other than that, no other language is related to ancient Egyptian, especially any language in Asia).

People may be confused about *who* the Egyptians or Nubians were, because of the constant collapses of the kingdoms, and invasions from both the east and west. The fact is, it changed many times between 4,000 BCE and the Meroitic Period, when imperial invasions increased and the Nubian capitol moved further south lasting until the 4^{th} century AD, when it was sacked by the Ethiopians. Scholars have focused on separating Nile Valley populations, but in the process, ignored their *integration*. Since these populations were in constant contact, over thousands of years, they were cultures of exchange and sharing, albeit the means may have been coercive in many cases. But when populations meet, *they may not bleed, but they always breed.* (Importantly, the modern nation state of South Sudan corresponds with the area that was south of Meroe in antiquity, thus it has an illustrious past.)

Hence, the integration of Nile Valley populations cannot be disregarded, in any analysis of Nubia and Egypt, although Egyptology has largely done so, portraying them as separate 'Races'. This formally commenced with the work of Sir William Flinders Petrie, inventor of the *Dynastic Race,* in the late nineteenth century; in conjunction with this, it was also hypothesized that the Egyptians migrated into Africa from, 'somewhere', but the work of Dr. Bruce Trigger and his colleagues refuted those claims in *Ancient Egypt: A Social History.* Ancient Egypt was an indigenous civilization of Africa. In conjunction, the Egyptians conquered numerous populations, and brought them into Egypt for thousands of years, inadvertently increasing the genetic diversity of its population.

The fact that Sir William Flinders Petrie was not aware of the predynastic Egyptian sites may account in part of his erroneous claims, which were followed by those of the Father of Nubiology, Dr. George A. Reisner, who misinterpreted Nile Valley Civilization as well, advancing his preconceived notions of Nubians that were common in 1913. Therefore, a rigorous deconstruction of the early studies and assumptions that emerged is underway, and rightfully so.

In conjunction, human origins in Africa have only recently been clarified, on the basis of Mitochondrial DNA analyses, and this must be taken into consideration when discussing African populations, and their descendants who have now inhabited all of the continents.

Changing technocomplexes over time led to sedentary living in various locales around the world during the *Holocene*, and Nubia, as opposed to Egypt, was one of the earliest sites for pottery making, 8,000 BCE. The early study of Nubia was based mainly on its relationship with the presumed power center, Egypt, and the hypothesized "A-Group" and other designations, which were supposed to be temporary around 1914, are still with us, and they were based on the number of Egyptian trade goods that were present. However, the Egyptians were 'late arrivers' in the ancient trade networks, because Nubians had already established trade with the Near East, evinced by the wares in their predynastic and early dynastic tombs, which were unknown in Egypt at the time; Nubians raised sheep and goats from the Levant as early as 6,000 BCE. Nubians moved north into Middle Egypt during the 5th millennium BCE, and spread their cultural practices, material culture, beliefs, and genes.

Upper Egypt and Lower Nubia shared predynastic burial traditions, and this cultural nexus is where many of the innovations that were to come, coalesced. Nubia's pastoral tradition laid the foundation for African pastoralism as a whole, drawing Egypt into its sphere in predynastic times, as noted by Dr. Maria Gatto. Curiously, Gatto makes a distinction between *Egypt* and *Africa* although Nubia and Egypt have a border in common (which was always in flux), and Egypt is not in the Middle East.

The Egyptian color symbolism system is, apparently, not well-understood by today's researchers for they assume that the Egyptians' depictions of self and other are absolutes; rather, they were idealized portraits, like the rhetoric discussed in *Wretched Kush*, which was more ideal than factual. Although countless inscriptions attest to the pharaoh's god-like military power, and the universal extent of his power, this was not the case, in reality. Taken at face value, one would surmise that the pharaoh did indeed have control of the world, but the *First Intermediate Period*, *Second Intermediate Period*, and *Third Intermediate Period* strongly suggest otherwise: the dynasties collapsed, due to internal and external forces that were beyond the control of the pharaoh. Thus, the presumed ubiquitous power that Egypt had relegated Nubia to the periphery: but is such an interpretation accurate? The answer appears to be *yes* and *no*, depending on the timeframe in question. What has been ignored, or misunderstood by Egyptologists, is that there would have been no Egypt without Nubia. Nubia was socially stratified and well-developed before the existence of Egypt as a state-level society. This was discovered at Qustul Cemetery L, and other sites that have been excavated recently in Nubia.

The *sacred bark*, which is of Nubian origin, was extremely prominent in pharonic Egypt; notably the massive sacred bark that has been attributed to Djedefra as a gift to his father Khufu. In conjunction with the Qustul Incense Burner, which contains the *serekh*, pharonic symbolism, and predates Abydos (the earliest known site in Egypt with pharonic symbolism), it seems irrational to place so much emphasis on dividing Egypt from Nubia: it's actually unjustifiable to do so. It is remarkable that there are so many derogatory characterizations of Nubians in the literature, and suggestions that they were somehow backward and incapable of civilization since:

> "The ancient town of Kerma was one of the earliest urbanized communities in tropical Africa. A settlement existed at the site from the late fourth millennium BC, but the main town began its growth is *c*.2400 BC, and remained in continuous occupation for a thousand years. Its central nucleus was a massive structure of unbaked brick, known as the Western 'Deffufa' (a local term for any large brick building). It appears to have been the principal religious building of Kerma, and comprise a large tower-like structure linked to a rectangular block, with gently sloping undecorated walls. The general shape is reminiscent of that of an Egyptian temple with a pylon gateway, and some of the building techniques used suggest that the prototype may have been some now-vanished type of brick edifice of contemporary Egypt. The Deffufa was one of the oldest buildings at Kerma and underwent considerable alteration before

> reaching its final form, by which time it was an almost solid block of masonry."[181]

Although Dr. John H. Taylor points out the antiquity of Kerma as a walled city in the fourth millennium BCE, a time when Greece did not exist, Rome did not exist, and Western Europe was still in the Neolithic phase, he emphasizes that Kerma is in "tropical Africa," as though it makes a big difference: Africa is Africa, regardless of its numerous biomes, which are contiguous and populations adapt to all of them, seamlessly.

The Concept of 'Sub-Saharan Africa'

A lot has been made of 'Sub-Saharan Africa' as though, somehow, the people who are below the Sahara have no role in, or around, the Sahara, which is curious. I doubt that ancient Africans considered themselves either "Sub-Saharan" or "Saharan" because, for example, the 25th Dynasty controlled Nubia and Egypt all the way to the Mediterranean, so *the Sahara* was not an obstacle, or dividing line, for them: it is an externally applied, misleading concept, based on "Race" ideology. Taylor removes the Egyptians out of Africa, and firmly establishes Nubians as "African" as though the Egyptians do not have an "African" background, referring to Nubians during the 8th century BCE with *claims* like: "Egyptian influence on the lives and customs of these people seems at first to have been limited. The use of circular tumuli and the laying of the corpse on a bed reflect the strongly African cultural background of the earlier rulers. The effects of the pharaohs' acculturation policy in the

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[181] John H. Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 21-22.

New Kingdom appear to have been lost during the following centuries."[182] Never stating 'what' the "cultural background" of the Egyptians is a glaring omission. This permeates the literature on Nubia and Egypt. It has been verified that writing began in Egypt, so Taylor considers the Nubians to be 'Egyptianized' due to their hieroglyphic writings, but here again, this is misleading because it would mean that the Sumerians and Hittites were 'Egyptianized too', since everyone who wrote learned the practice from the Egyptians. Non-African cultures adapted the practice of writing things down, as opposed to cylinder seals or pictograms, based on their own languages. If Nubians were writing in Egyptian hieroglyphs, they must have been able to speak the language, so distinctions between Nubians and Egyptians are, again, being made on "Race" which is a fallacious ideology: convenient, but irrational. According to Dr. Michael C. Robbins (University of Minnesota, 1968), my dissertation supervisor in graduate school, Dr. Franz Boas, who is the Father of American Anthropology, once asked a Ph.D. candidate during his defense "What is the connection between Race, Language, and Culture?" The student thought about it, and thought, and thought, and finally, he said with trepidation… "I just can't think of any…" giving up, resigned to his fate. Dr. Boas said, "That's the answer: there isn't any." People assume that there is a connection between "Race, Language, and Culture" but this is a fallacy. In reality, humans have a level of plasticity that allows them to adapt to a myriad of circumstances, thus where you were 'born', what language is spoken there, your hairstyle, diet, dress, your customs and practices are all subject to change. The *capacity* for language is a human trait, and it is not restricted (*i.e.*

[182] ibid., 18.

you were not 'born' to speak any particular language: you can learn any one, or many languages).

Therefore, the language that you speak, how you dress, and what holidays you celebrate cannot define you, although we have all been taught that it can, during our early learning experiences. This assumption is rife with error, and it does not hold up under empirical scrutiny, since *Identity* is a subjective concept. Dr. Robert Lowie addressed this problem, and developed the *Culture Construct* (according to Lowie, what we are seeing is merely a "snapshot" of a culture, in time and space, and it is constantly changing, not static). Applying such boundaries to ancient populations, who we only know from scattered archaeological sites and selective writings, is certainly dubious since we can only infer, although much absolutism regarding Nubia and Egypt has hardened. The specter of *Primitivism* arises during the evaluation of Nubians, because the *Culture Construct* for them that has emerged from Egyptology includes the expectation for them to remain *Primitive* and static, essentially, forever: if they are not doing so, then they become *inauthentic*, because they are not behaving in the primate manner that is expected:

> "Shabaqo (c.716-702 BC) and his three successors Shabitqo, Taharqo, and Tanutamani regarded themselves as legitimate pharaohs of Egypt and were later reckoned as constituting the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. They ruled both Egypt and Kush for about fifty years, bringing much needed peace and stability to the northern kingdom. They posed as true Egyptian pharaohs, ruling with the support of Amun, and they adopted Egyptian royal costume, pharonic

titularies Egyptian royal burial customs. Nonetheless, they retained their Nubian names, had their southern physical traits represented in sculpture, and adhered to a Nubian tradition of royal succession, by which the throne sometimes passed from the king to his brother. Despite their southern origins these kings displayed great respect and enthusiasm for the traditions of Egypt. An even more striking example of the fusion of different influences is the sphinx of Taharqa in the British museum."[183]

The Culture Constructs of Nubia and Egypt

Thus, the Nubians merely "posed" as pharaohs, based on the Culture Construct of Nubians that froze them into an *Identity* that was "southern" (a euphemism for "Negroid"), and although Nubians were responsible for the invention of pharonic practice, it is attributed to *the Egyptians* (although the archaeological evidence referenced in this book strongly suggests otherwise); they are *inauthentic*, it seems, considering their "southern physical traits" which is another way of saying that "Negroids" cannot be *real* Egyptian pharaohs, since Egyptians are 'another Race'. Actually, Nubians' ancestors were definitely on the throne of Egypt during the Middle Kingdom, so it was not mere imitation or 'Egyptianization', during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. Thus, when Middle Kingdom features appear in the sculpture from the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, Taylor seems to be surprised:

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[183] ibid., 38-39.

> "A number of statues of Tarhaqo and Tanutamani from Gebel Barkal have powerfully modeled bodies and simple costumes familiar from the Old Kingdom models, yet the torsos have a marked middle line characteristic of Middle Kingdom sculpture. An even more striking example of the fusion of different influences is the sphinx of Taharqo from Kawa, in the British Museum. In its basic form the sculpture is a traditional manifestation of Egyptian kingship but in the depiction of the lion's mane around the king's face the sculptor has drawn on very old models, the finest examples of which date to the Twelfth Dynasty. The bold carving of the face, in which the distinctive Nubian features are strongly marked, lends the piece a vigor and realism which is one of the hallmarks of the finest Napatan art. One feature present here which is peculiarly characteristic of sculpture of this period is the pronounced furrow at each side of the nose—the so-called 'Kushite fold.'"[184]

Again, the "nose" and the "distinctive Nubian features lend vigor and realism" to the sculpture, emphasizing how 'different' Nubians look from 'Egyptians' and the reader is left to draw his/her own conclusions; but the inference is again that Nubians are a different "Race" as opposed to the descendants of Middle Kingdom pharaohs, who have reclaimed the traditions and beliefs of their ancestors. It is not unusual to see this

[184] ibid., 41-42.

emphasis on "Race" when it comes to the analysis of the interactions sphere of Nubia and Egypt; instead of looking at this area as Nile Valley Civilization, an area that experienced dramatic change from the fourth millennium BCE until the capitol of Meroe was established, Nubians and Egyptians are never allowed to meld, being separated at every opportunity using modern "Race" ideology in the place of an objective analysis of the archaeological and historical records. Since the bulk of the literature was written by Europeans, their biases are an inescapable feature of their work, which insures that they will find what they are looking for; researchers begin their work with a *theory*, and conduct their fieldwork and/or analysis of the existing literature: but what if their theory is wrong, and should they even have one before they conduct a study? This is an ongoing trend, and most probably it compromises research outcomes; especially in the case of Nubia, where there are long periods about which there are no discernible written or archaeological records: mysteries remain unsolved.

From the eighth century BCE until the fourth century AD, Meroe was a prominent site between the Fifth Cataract and the Sixth Cataract, as invaders from the north pushed Nubian centers farther south; it is at Meroe that a new script emerged, presumably in an indigenous language, however it has not been deciphered as no model like the Rosetta Stone has been found. Pyramid building was quite extensive there, and they outnumber the pyramids in Egypt by about two-to-one, albeit their size is smaller and their slope is steeper.

Herodotus on the 'Ethiopians'

"Herodotus, writing in the late fifth century BC, repeated a fanciful description of the 'Ethiopians' as giants who habitually reached 120 years of age and bound their prisoners in gold chains."[185] Due to Meroe's difficult to reach location, it was not a destination for outsiders and there are not many descriptions of the area from antiquity, apart from the Meroitic script, which is not legible. However, it can be deduced from murals that men and women ruled interchangeably.

Nubians clashed with the Greeks and Romans after Alexander the Great's invasion of Egypt in the fourth century BCE, and the Romans in the 1st century BCE; trade networks with the Romans developed, but they collapsed between the second and third centuries AD, as the Ethiopians' *Axumite Civilization* flourished (the *actual Ethiopians* in Ethiopia, for a change although the term is in Greek). King Ezana may have been responsible for the ultimate end of the illustrious Meroitic period, invading and sacking Meroe early in the fourth century AD, but this has been drawn into question as an oversimplification, by Dr. Derek A. Welsby. The elaborate burials in Nubia ceased, and the earlier subsistence patterns returned as pharonic practice at Meroe vanished. This represented the end of a nearly 4,000-year-old belief system that was gradually replaced by the spread of the Roman Empire, and Christianity. Africa would never be the same, nor would the Western world.

[185] ibid., 47.

Christianity and Paganism

African belief systems (and any other system that was not Christian) were declared to be *Pagan* as Christianity entered Egypt under the control of imperial Rome; non-Christian practices were viciously persecuted. (For example, the famous female Egyptian Mathematician and Philosopher *Hypatia*'s work was deemed pagan by the Christian Bishop Cyril, and he had her killed by a mob of Christians in 415 AD, in order to wipe out non-Christian, empirical methods of teaching and learning.)

> "Whatever theories we propound concerning the events and developments in Nubia from the third century AD to the sixth century AD, they are bound to be inadequate. Any evidence for dramatic change is brought into question by the strong evidence for continuity. Nonetheless, the early medieval kingdoms known to us from the writings of the Byzantine ecclesiastical historians of the sixth century AD existed in a world very different from that of the late Kushite period. The Byzantine historian Procopius, writing in the mid-sixth century AD, records that Diocletian withdrew the frontier to the First Cataract and called upon the Nobatae to occupy and defend the vacated territory against a hostile desert tribes collectively call the Blemmyes. There is no mention in this account of the Kushites and it is generally assumed that they were in no position to play any part in the occupation of the old Roman province. With the

> withdrawal of the Roman frontier to the First Cataract, it may have been the Kushites who stepped in to fill the political vacuum, the situation recorded by Procopius being more relevant to his own time when the Kushites had faded into history."[186]

It is possible that the royal family was not able to wield as much power, since Meroe was no longer a major hub in the trade route that had been so lucrative, in early Roman times. By trading with the *Ethiopians* and using routes near the Red Sea, the Romans found a more accessible passage way, and Meroe declined as an important player by the late third century or early fourth century AD. When civilizations collapse, a number of factors seem to converge simultaneously; climate change could bring an immediate disaster, especially in the Nile Valley where so much is predicated upon the annual flooding of the Nile.

Another factor could be the loss of belief in the leader by the population in question; if the people no longer believe that she/he can provide for them, *Great Tradition* (*e.g.* monumental architecture, pageantry, imperialism, for example) culture can be abandoned and the population may disburse, shifting too *Little Tradition* (*i.e.* basic household maintenance, extended families, personal belief systems or a reformulation of the Great Tradition ideas, but scaled down) practices and surviving for thousands of years. One of the recurrent features of ancient civilization is collapse; we see this worldwide, where civilization has developed; on the other hand, *Little Tradition* cultures flourish and they have prevailed into the twenty-first

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[186] Derek A. Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush: the Napatan and Meroitic Empires* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998) 196-197.

century, especially in the Amazon (where some populations were first 'discovered' at the end of the twentieth century), New Guinea and other locales in Oceania. Nubia and Egypt were no different, in this respect, and the converging factors (some of them we know of, such as invasions and the introduction of Christianity) eventually overcame these once powerful civilizations, leaving us with only their ruins.

Regardless, they are thoroughly intriguing, and even in our modern times, we must marvel at their accomplishments, for good or ill. As Dr. Jared Diamond so poignantly argues in *The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race* 10,000 years ago when humans shifted from gathering and hunting, in certain places around the world like the Nile Valley, it was the biggest mistake that humans ever made; this led to *Civilization*, in an extremely short period of time (about 5,000 years after intensive agriculture began).

Civilization and Progress

Civilization, as this book has shown, involves the organized plunder of culture areas by armies that are owned by elites (they pay them for their services, and hoard the spoils), a trend toward increasing social stratification, despotism (the forerunner of modern *Dictatorship*), and populations who are taxed and held hostage by elites (*Writing* itself was invented for bureaucrats to keep track of all of their taxation activities in Egypt, 3,250 BCE; it wasn't used for *Poetry* until much later). So often, people think of Civilizations as being "Progress," but as Dr. Diamond has explained, it was just the opposite.

The collapse of virtually all of the ancient civilizations, at some point, provides evidence that these agrarian, imperialist civilizations did not necessarily represent progress: rather, they continue to imprison modern populations, who are on the same treadmill of rise and fall. The diet that we have inherited from the ancient civilizations is still destroying the health of people today, because we have so little variety: and it was *Food Production* that was the basis of Nubia and Egypt's growth. As Dr. Diamond noted, wheat, rice, and corn comprise the bulk of the modern diet, and they are all nutritionally deficient in some way; gatherer-hunters consume about seventy different plants and our modern diseases are unknown to most of them. We have mass quantities of food today, but a minimal variety of foods because most of it is genetically engineered corn. We also inherited population growth from ancient civilization, and there are over 7 billion people on the planet today; based on a 2% growth rate, this figure is on track to double in 30-35 years, thanks to the shift from gathering and hunting to agriculture.

As a result, we really need to assess Nile Valley Civilization a bit more critically, rather than simply being mystified by pyramids, gold, and great titles (which were usually exaggerated). Since sedentary living and pottery making emerged in Nubia 10,000 years ago, it was on the cusp of the emergent *Civilization* trend of the Holocene, and it influenced not only Egypt (of course no such distinctions existed at that time), but their early trading partners in the Near East as well. This is not a Neo-Luddite trope, and it might be difficult to imagine our world without the Parthenon, the tomb of Shi Haungdi (that's the one in China with 8,000 terra cotta soldiers buried to guard the ruler in the afterlife), Pyramids of Giza, Hieroglyphs, King Tut's golden death mask, and such, but at

what cost? Is seems that, from 4,000 BCE to the present, the Nile Valley has been in almost constant turmoil, being invaded by thieves from all sides; in turn, Egyptians and Nubians were invaders as well, with varying degrees of 'success' at it. The importance is that it occurred concurrently with Mesopotamian civilization, before Greek civilization, before Roman civilization, and Harappan civilization thereby setting the belligerent trend of conquest warfare that we continue to experience today.

If you are reading this, then *Civilization* is all that you would know, because we were born into it; therefore, it is difficult to 'wrap your head around' a world without overpopulation (the carrying capacity is troubled, and extinctions are occurring apace), constant warfare, or modern diseases (brought on by overcrowding and sedentary lifestyles), and this we owe to *The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race* of which Nubia and Egypt are major progenitors; this is a perspective that cannot be ignored, however tempting that might be.

On the other hand, there are two absolutely critical reasons why the study of Nubia and Egypt is imperative: the gross misrepresentation of Africans by the Western and Near Eastern world, and the endeavors of the *Committed School of Black Studies*. In the literature and consciousness of the Western world, Africa represents the epitome of savagery, backwardness, and social retardation: a pathetic place of subhuman inertia; which developed in tandem with the Arab and Atlantic slave trades. Although Europeans and Arabs had been enslaved for thousands of years (*e.g.* the Vikings had a lucrative slave trade, and the Romans were extremely prolific

enslavers), slavery has been consciously projected upon Africans alone. In conjunction, Africans were said to have no civilization anyway, so there was nothing to talk about, no buyer's remorse for participation in slave trading; in order to accomplish this, Egypt was consciously removed from Africa. As a result, Africans were portrayed as being "behind" all of the world's populations who are now civilized. This is the biggest lie ever told. Europeans, who published volume after volume on Africa, misrepresenting its past, are the descendants of populations that had no civilizations, during the time that Egypt and Nubia enjoyed their highest peaks, but one would never know this from the literature. Only in recent times has the knowledge surfaced that all humans living today originated from African populations, who lived about 200,000 years ago, based on Mitochondrial DNA evidence. This complicates the picture for Eurocentric studies that denigrate their own ancestors, or try to selectively create an origin for themselves. Regardless, there is incontrovertible evidence that all humans share an African ancestry. Therefore, people who have been taught otherwise are not really responsible for their erroneous beliefs about themselves, because they were taught by people whom they trusted. As a result, irreversible damage has been done, regarding peoples' understanding of the African men and women past, and present.

Africa and American Educational System

The *Committed School of Black Studies* has been working to address the dearth of factual information on African civilization, and the populations who have been enslaved or stolen from that continent. As far as academic institutions are

concerned, the discipline of *Black Studies* formally emerged in America around 1968, although numerous scholars had been conducting studies on African-related topics for decades (with limited resources, in most cases, due to their segregation-based exclusion). America's primary schools, middle schools, high schools, colleges, and universities virtually eliminated Africa and people of African ancestry from their curricula, apart from a number of derogatory stereotypes. Egypt may have been mentioned, but it was not associated with Africa, consciously or unconsciously: it was portrayed as a world apart. The upshot of this is, Africa had no history, Africa had no civilizations, Africa was irrelevant to world history... Black Studies departments and programs were a force that caused the institutions to recognize their academic errors; it was an uneasy truce, and most of the Black Studies departments and programs have been either eliminated or downsized, going the way of *Affirmative Action*. It may seem curious that America would have millions of people in its domain, but not know or even want to know anything about them from the standpoint of their origin and history: rightly so! However, this has been the case, and it remains as such: one can graduate from an American college or university, and never study Africa, which is a big continent (about three times the size of the USA). The curricula are based on what is considered important in the Western world, and Africa is not considered to be important. A case in point is when I gave a lecture at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, around 2002, on Egypt. It was a deeply disturbing experience. After discussing Nile Valley Civilization for an hour, to an audience of inmates ranging in age from about twenty to sixty years of age, a young African American man about twenty-eight-years-old, came up to me in tears. He had been in prison for ten years

already and was not scheduled to get out anytime soon. He said, "*Why didn't someone teach me this before*?" The young man had dropped out of high school, and had become a criminal, supporting the *Prison Industrial Complex*. As we talked, he emphasized how he had never heard about any of this in school, and that he wished he had known more about himself, being of African ancestry. Thus, people who are constantly told that they are worthless, generation after generation, often internalize these beliefs, especially if they are reinforced at every turn, as they are for African Americans. The results are catastrophic. The body simply executes what the mind tells it to do; depending on what the mindset is, behaviors are prone to follow. According to the psychiatrist, Dr. Abram Kardiner (who worked with Dr. Sigmund Freud in Europe, before returning to New York to work with anthropologists Dr. Cora DuBois, Dr. Ralph Linton, and Dr. Ruth Benedict), and his colleagues who were early psychological anthropologists, *all human behavior is cultural*. Herein lays the need that Black Studies attempted to address, by including African-centered courses in the curricula. Needless to say, they immediately came under attack by the establishments where they were housed for two main reasons: academia never wanted them there in the first place, and they wanted budget allocations to be used for *something else*. This is why the young man in prison, who may have been in high school in the nineteen eighties, knew nothing about Nile valley civilization. He is not alone. There are many people who actually have degrees from universities and colleges, although they've never studied Africa.

The claim of *Essentialism* has been levied at Black Studies scholars; in other words, 'you are just tooting your own horn, trying to make yourselves look great'. Critics of Black

Studies scholars claim that they are simply *making things up*, to make their ancestors seem historically important, that there was no civilization in Africa 'until someone from the West brought it to Africa', and that Africans lived in a 'state of darkness' until they were rescued and civilized (partially, at least) by the West. The archaeological evidence shows the opposite to be the case. Therefore, *Black Studies* is faced with the need to provide reverence for ancient African civilizations, and African populations as a whole, from whom all humans have descended.

Claims that Africa represents the unknown are spurious. African history is the best documented history in the world, because writing began there, at *Abydos*. The chronology of the pharaohs alone has no equal in the historic record, and any creditable study of world history cannot ignore this fact. Thus, *Blacks Studies* scholars do not need to make anything up, because it's already there: in the hieroglyphs, in the pyramids, in the *Deffufa*, all in Africa's Nile Valley.

The *Essentialism* trope is one of the conceits that allows Western curricula to exclude the study of Africa, and African populations, in earnest. In conjunction, should the study of Africa become incorporated in Western curricula, the result may not be positive, because it would force Europeans to come to terms with their activities in Africa, which are not positive by any measure. Three main invasions: the Greek invasion, the Roman invasion, and the Atlantic slave trade followed by settler colonialism in Africa after the discovery of quinine's anti-malarial properties are disturbing to the self-image of the modern Democratic ethos. The term *Colonialism* has been used to mask absolute savagery associated with the entry of Europeans in Africa; *Colonialism* has become a benign term, however it

involves nothing more than modern organized plunder on a heretofore unknown scale. The entire African continent was "colonized" by Europeans. (Any claim that Liberia was 'not colonized' is fallacious (Scholars often claim that Ethiopia and Liberia were two countries that were not invaded or colonized, since the Ethiopians beat the Italians in 1898 when they invaded, however they were invaded again by Italians in the 1930s under Benito Mussolini, and occupied for years; Liberia was certainly invaded by America in the 1800s. Hence, Americo-Liberians controlled the country for nearly two centuries, with Charles Taylor being deposed only in recent times).

Identity, and the Misrepresentation of the Human Past

It is paradoxical to hold modern populations responsible for the behaviors of their predecessors, and it is often distasteful for them to confront these realities. There is a choice to be made: knowing or not knowing. In my opinion, *knowing* is always the right path, otherwise, people operate within an erroneous paradigm. By knowing, more cogent assessments are possible, and mistakes of the past can *perhaps* be avoided: I emphasize *perhaps*, because the past is too often ignored and we see the same mistakes, time after time. The misrepresentation of the past relates to *Identity*. If identity is inaccurate and/or misrepresented, it can only be followed by faulty images of self, and other, in the present. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in the case of Africa, and its people.

The concept of objectivity has been *thrown to the four winds* over the past 500 years, when it comes to discussing African in a balanced manner. In significant ways, objectivity in *Academia* is a recent phenomenon in itself, evidenced by

the exclusion of Africans from the world stage, apart from *Slavery*: it is this identity that has been projected upon people of African ancestry for so long that it has become their reality, a worldwide reality, influencing all specters of the sociocultural realm. How balanced is the projection of slavery upon people of African ancestry, in view of Nile Valley Civilization, which started to coalesce about 9,500 years ago, and lasted for nearly 7,000 years? Why should only the last 500 years be emphasized, and the previous 9,000 years be discarded? This is what has occurred, and most probably, it depends on who is writing, just as it did in ancient Egypt where the *Wretched Kush* epithet emerged.

As a result, we see that misrepresentation is not a modern scholarly phenomenon, for it existed in antiquity as well. In no small way, this explains why, in modern populations' imagination, there is no coherent understanding, or cognition, of Nubia, regardless of the major role it played in Nile Valley Civilization. It may not be an outright conspiracy. However, those who claimed to be studying the area began with their preconceived notions, and found what they were looking for; it did not include "Negroids" being responsible for the emergence of Egyptian civilization, or being pharaohs during the Middle Kingdom. A myth was concocted that made the pharaohs of the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty "Black" and ephemeral; apart from that, "Negroids" were simply peripheral populations who, from time to time, caused *problems* for the Egyptians, or served in the Egyptian army… Where presumably, there never was any real integration between Egyptians and Nubians. This has been the starting point, which is in accord with the ideas of modern segregation, based on the ideology of "Race".

With this in mind, a new point of departure is now in order. Although an untold number of volumes have been produced on Egypt, and a few on Nubia, many of them simply repeat the same erroneous generalizations about Nubia, year after year. Some books on Egypt do not even mention Nubia: it is as though Nubia didn't exist. *But, what make you of the gold in Egypt*? Where did it come from? How did it get there? The extent to which Nubia is excluded from the conversation on Egypt is stunning, when the fact is, one must begin with the study of *Nubia* in order to arrive at the emergence of Egypt!

In my opinion, the findings regarding Nubia's past make Egypt all the more interesting, because we finally know the origin of their fundamental practices and beliefs, especially the pharonic processions, serekhs, and the sacred bark. The archaeologists who are working in Nubia today are to be applauded for rewriting World History, and reeducating modern scholars; Nubia is not included in the canon of World Civilization, and it should be, if there is any plan to discuss ancient Egypt, which is unavoidable when it comes to the study of the world's civilizations. No longer is it appropriate to merely start with a discussion of Egypt, since there is overwhelming evidence that points to Nubia as its progenitor; in conjunction, Nubia and Egypt are intertwined to the point that they are inseparable, for one cannot be discussed in any intelligent way, without the other.

Egyptologists and the Study of Nubia

There is a 'somewhat positive' step toward the recognition of Nubia by Egyptologists. The publication in February 2012 of an edited book titled *Ancient Nubia: African*

Kingdoms on the Nile. One of the four editors is Dr. Salima Ikram, an outstanding and well-known Egyptologist with a very high profile. I say 'somewhat positive' for two main reasons; the first is that one of the leading Egyptologists has possibly figured out that they should have been starting with Nubia, in order to understand Egypt, in the first place. (Better late than never, instead of *better never than late!*) Unfortunately, it is an *edited* book, which is a collection of articles that focus on one aspect of Nubia or another, and is in no way comprehensive: undoubtedly, large swaths of the chronology will be eliminated, due to the nature of edited books. This is not to say that the book will not be compelling or useful, but its reach cannot exceed its grasp.

The other issue is embedded in the title of the book, *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile*, that emphasizes the 'African-ness' of Nubia, which they would never do for a book on Egypt... which is right next door... So the question for this title becomes: *which kingdoms on the Nile are NOT African* and *why haven't they been adding the African characterization to books on Egypt, which is also located on the Nile*? The mindset, going in, is based on the pervasive "Race" ideology that has been repeated, overtly and subtly, by scores of Egyptologists: they seem to have misgivings and anxieties about Nubia, possibly because they are now afraid that it will interfere with the volumes that they have written on Egypt, which usually portrayed Nubia as peripheral and unimportant. Although it has not even been published yet, *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms of the Nile* has already taken a position on Nubia, and it is the same one that Egyptologists have been repeating for the past two-hundred years, subtly and overtly. The "African Kingdoms on the Nile" that are not African are

never identified, for they would be an oxymoron at least in antiquity. With all of the methods and equipment for scientific analysis that modern Egyptologists have at their disposal, the assumptions that have undermined the study of Nile Valley Civilization remain in place; research outcomes are totally dependent upon who conducts the research. It is advisable that Egyptologists should make a paradigm shift, from rigorous separation to syncretism, and a focus on the shared features of Nubia and Egypt in order to enhance our understanding of civilization in ancient Africa. Although all populations have variation within themselves, and between themselves, it is impossible to construct rigid boundaries and fit people into them: especially over millennia. In the case of the human animal, the only constants are change and adaptation; this is especially true in east Africa, where the most genetic variation on earth continues to exist.

As Foucault's *Genealogy* suggests, human history cannot be viewed simply in terms of a sequence of rational events, as they are often projected; the facts are exceedingly more interesting, as this reexamination of the relationship between Nubia and Egypt has shown. Indeed, the Nile Valley sites require a fresh look, although the artifacts may have been compiled decades ago.

Ironically, with the emergence of the new nation-state South Sudan in our twenty-first century, Egyptologists continue to cling to the characterization of Nubia that was established by their predecessors of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, compounding the misrepresentation of Nubia and Egypt, for generations to come. We now have a golden opportunity to unify the analyses of Nubia and Egypt in

antiquity, thereby creating a cogent, new synthesis that is only possible in our time.



Illustrations

Photo 1: Philae, Nubia
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Photo 2: Egypt and Nubia Map, 1840.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Photo 3: Gizeh, 1896
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

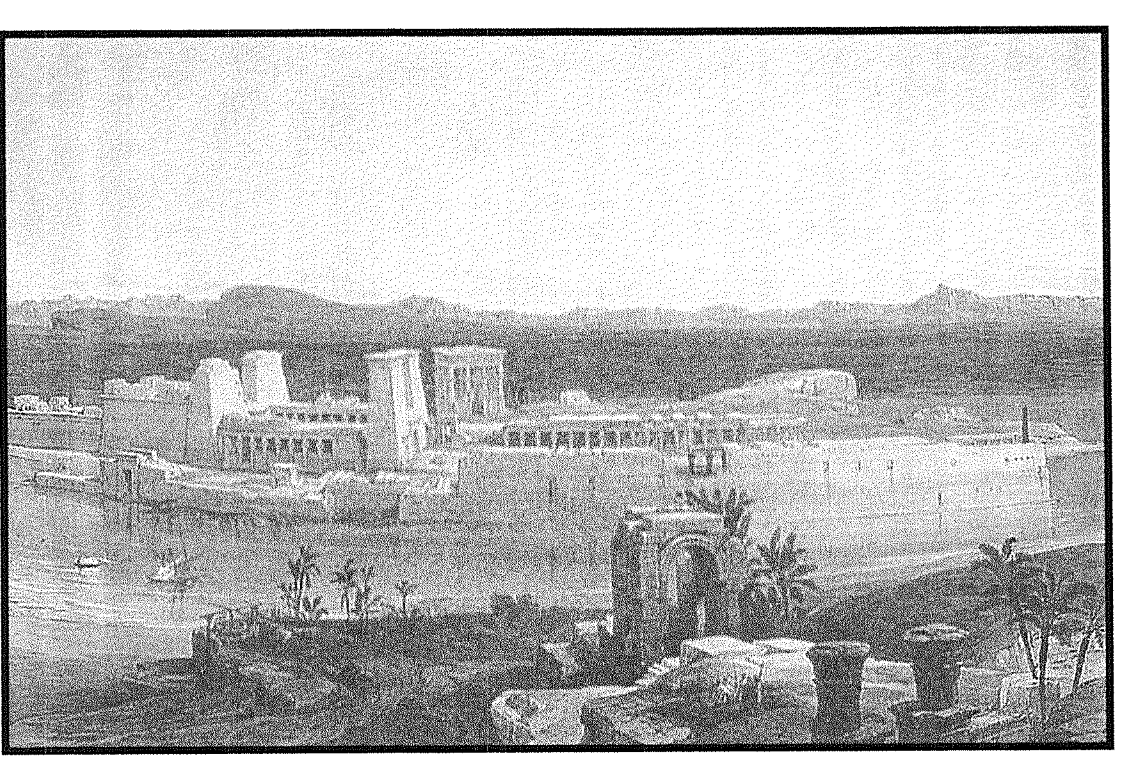


Photo 1

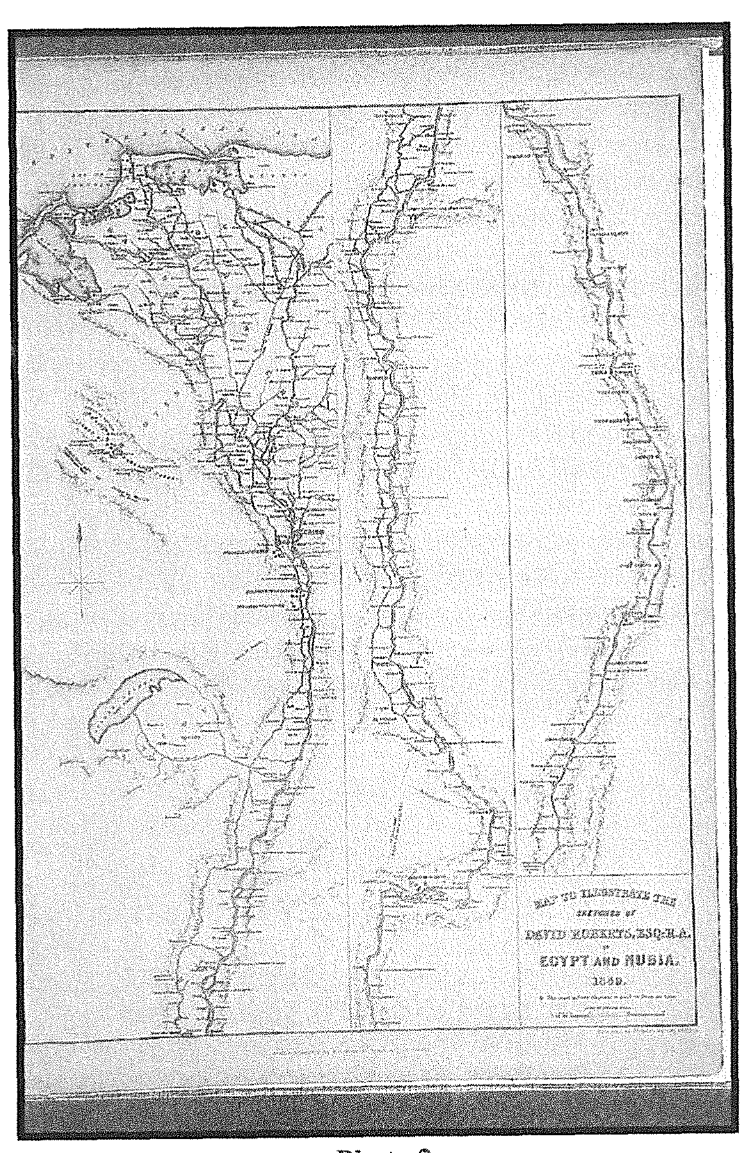


Photo 2

Photo 3

The Gizeh Group from the Valley of the Nile, Egy

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